

Worcester 12012

S E R M O N S

ON THE

A R T I C L E S

OF THE

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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HEBR. ii. 6.

HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS.—

RELIGION consists in a proper disposition of mind, and due demeanour towards the Supreme Being. It implies therefore the belief of his existence; and will be liable to many irregularities and much danger, if that belief be not well fixed, and supported by solid arguments. Men may indeed be persuaded

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on

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on slender grounds ; and such persuasions may be sufficient sometimes to produce suitable dispositions and actions: but persuasions not rooted in truth, are more liable either to be torn up by the blast of a violent temptation, or consumed by the tooth of time.

But it is our own fault, if our faith be
 Acts xiv. 17. exposed to this danger. *God hath not left himself without witness:* and the grounds on which we believe his Being, as they are most unquestionable, so they are easy to be known. Great reason, no doubt, there is, to acknowledge our ignorance, and the wisest persons have always been the most sensible of it; yet, amidst all that cloud of darkness with which the human mind is overspread, we may still
 Acts xvii. 27, 28. *feel after, and find, the first cause of our own and of all existence, who is not far from every one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being.*

Observe

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Observe first the *universality* of this belief, with regard both to time and place; no nation having been known so barbarous, nor age so ignorant, nor period so remote, in which traces of this persuasion are not discernible.

The notions must be *natural*, in which all concur. Or if we are wrong in ascribing the formation and government of all things to a divine power; it is an honour even to err, in company with the wise and virtuous of every nation and age.

But *prudence* as well as modesty should teach us deference to such authority, and distrust of our own opinions, when we find them so suspiciously peculiar. A wise person chooses to follow the *multitude* Exod. xxiii, 2, when it is not *to do evil*; and will stay till he has demonstration on his side, before he stands single in such a cause against the whole world.

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But the *demonstration*, as profound inquirers have pronounced, is on the same side with authority. And even if we should not be able to discern the force of their conclusions; yet, besides the former argument from universal consent, the very *testimony* of these persons is something: nay, it is considerable; except we can go so far beyond them in these researches, as to detect the fallacies that have misled them. For if we only do not comprehend the inference; there still remains ground to think, that they may discern it, who say they do; and who have given us on other occasions good reason to acknowledge their abilities and sincerity.

The ideas of *Space* and *Time*, force themselves upon us, whether we will or no; so that we cannot, even in imagination, suppose them either not to be, or to be limited. We know intuitively that they exist, and are without bounds.

Infinity

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Infinity and Eternity cannot otherwise be, than by being the Properties of something Eternal and Infinite : therefore there is such a Being.

If you see the force of this argument, your faith is, so far, changed into *knowledge*. If not, there is no need you should pretend to do it. *Will you talk* Job xiii. 7, 8. *deceitfully for God? Will you accept his person?* Attend to other proofs, level to every capacity.

The being of the Creator is seen in his *works*, and these either *miraculous*, or *common*. The order of nature, and every interruption of that order, speak the same language, and *declare the glory of God*. Nor is there any thing in this way of reasoning either deceitful or obscure.

A Prophet tells you, suppose, as the Psalmist doth, that *it is the Lord who* Psal. xcvi. *made the heavens; glory and worship are be-* 5, 6.

fore him, power and honour are in his sanctuary. You answer, with the scoffers
 2 Pet. 3, 4. mentioned by the Apostle, *All things continue as they were from the beginning.* Could he speak with the same effect, as did the
 Jos. x. 12. leader of the Jews, *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Aijalon; when the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day; would he take for granted the existence of a superiour power, or prove it?*

In what way did Elijah reason, when
 1 Kin. x. he put the wood in order, and cut the Bullock in pieces, and said, *fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood?* The people who were present when the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench, they found no defect in his argument; they fell on their faces and said, *The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.*

But

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But without the help of Revelation, or even of History; the contemplation of the works of nature, as we call them; the order, proportion, and use, of the several parts of the visible world; the undeniable marks of design, and numberless instances of art inimitable; which appear evidently before us, in every region where we cast our eye, the heavens, the earth, the sea, the air; in the material, vegetable, animal world; in the body and in the mind of man; all these constitute a proof as convincing as a thousand demonstrations, that the author of them all is a Being endued with a vast extent of power, and understanding, and with benevolence.

And if this disposition be the *sum* or *source* of all moral goodness; if the other virtues derive their quality of *good* from their inherent tendency to promote happiness; or if they do but in effect promote it; then the same arguments which establish this principle in the Supreme Being,

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will

will be a proof also of his other moral attributes.

But waving this argument, the constitution of the world itself affords distinct traces of *Justice* and *Mercy*, as well as *Goodness*, in its Author.

Though we dare not say that Justice is distributed perfectly; yet it is equally remote from truth to assert that the vicious, in the common course of things, are as successful and happy as the good and virtuous. The frame of the world we live in is favourable to virtue, which is an argument of the *Justice* of its Author.

His *mercy* appears in the provision he has made for the recovery of persons who have involved themselves in calamities by their vices; His *Patience* in the delay which is observable between the crime and the natural punishment of it, together with the intervening opportunities of escaping.

All

All these Arguments, however, are both liable to cavils, and also do only indicate these several dispositions in the Divine Being in an imperfect degree.

But we have, I think, a proof of the moral Attributes of the Deity, every one of us within his own breast. We are assured by an inward *consciousness*, clear and certain, which needs no explanation, and leaves no room for doubt, that a regard to Justice, Truth, and Goodness, is more excellent than the violation of them. These perceptions carry their own authority with them. Their command is a reason, a *Law*, which no person without self-condemnation transgresses. And this law is obeyed, bad as the world is, often, though not so often as it ought; and would ever be obeyed, by every person, were it not for the calls of Appetite, and the tumult of Passion. The mind of *Man*, alas! is often born away by these against his better judgment, or is agitated perhaps

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haps alternately by a contrary impulse, and fluctuates between *Desire* and *Duty*.

But the *Divine Mind*, being liable to no such commotions, must ever be directed by unerring wisdom. There is no room for a civil war in the breast of the Omnipotent. He has no wants to supply, nor foes to fear; no appetites to importune, nor passions to pervert him. *Rectitude* therefore must be his Rule. While his infinite government steers it's course along the tide of Eternity, sure and steady will be the regard to this immutable point, in the clear calm region of the Divine Bosom, which no clouds of ignorance can darken, nor storms of temptation discompose.

In this persuasion therefore we rest, There is an eternal, infinite Being. Who, himself owing his existence to no other, is the cause from which all things have had their beginning. He made the world: and it is under laws of his appointment;

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and

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and subject to the government of his will. He has all power, and wisdom: and these attributes have been amply exerted in acts of goodness. He is the Father of the Universe. The methods indeed of his Providence are to us often incomprehensible: yet have we sufficient reason to believe that he guides himself by the rule of *right*; So that when we conform to the same rule, we comply with his will, and concur with him in his designs.

Consider now what encouragement this is to the practice of *virtue*. When you are doing good, you are doing what God doth, and what he wishes you to do. You are employed in the very same work with your Creator, and assisting him to accomplish his divine undertakings. You are advancing the end for which the earth itself was created; and according to your measure, may say, with the Redeemer himself, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I* John v. 17.
work.

Or

Or if, in contemplating that principal part of the Creator's work exposed to your inspection, the nature and state of man, you discern that it was not the indiscriminate communication of good that was intended, by him who made us, but the welfare especially of the good and virtuous, of the discreet, the diligent, the temperate, and the just; then let this, in like manner, be your object. Do you good especially to the well-deserving; relieve the necessitous, but those most, who

Rom. xii. 8. are sober and industrious. *He that giveth let him do it with simplicity* indeed, but with prudence; *he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness,* and yet with discernment.

Psal. cxlv.

9.

Prov. xii. *but they that deal truly are his delight. He*

22.

Matth. v. *maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the*

xlv.

1 Pet. iii. *good; but the eyes of the Lord are over the*

12.

Pf. xxxiv. *righteous, and he delivereth the souls of his*

15. 22.

servants. Draw as near as you can to the

di-

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13

divine pattern, and *be perfect even as your* Matth. v. 48.
Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Or lastly, if you have been able to penetrate so far into the divine counsels, as to discover that it is not the happiness even of good men, that is intended in this world, but only their support in it, and their improvement in piety and virtue while they are passing through it to a better; let it be your care to advance this step also in your imitation of God, and pursue the intentions of him who made you to the utmost.

Do good to all, especially to them who are Gal. vi. 10.
of the household of faith; and among these
 most of all to the best, and do to them and all others the best service, by promoting above all things their future welfare. This all persons, even the poorest, may do by a pious example; others by that and many other ways, which will readily occur
 to

to such as have a heart disposed to find them.

Thus may your *mite*, proportioned to your ability, and coming from a good heart, be to you, as if you had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and imprisoned; as if you had been

Rom. ii. 20. *a guide of the blind, an instructor of the foolish;*
 1 Tim. ii. 7. *a preacher and an Apostle. Though poor, thus*
 1 Tim. vi. 18. *rich in good works; however ignorant, wise*
 2 Tim. iii. 15. *unto salvation; you shall shine as the bright-*
 Dan. xii. 3. *ness of the firmament, and, turning many to*
righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

S E R M O N II.

J O H N xiv. 1.

Y E B E L I E V E I N G O D ; B E L I E V E A L S O I N M E .

A M I D S T innumerable and undeniable marks of divine wisdom and goodness, we find in the world confusion, sin and misery. Revelation informs us that it was not created in this disordered state; that a great change has taken place in it, occasioned by the fault of a human pair, it's first inhabitants; by which means
their

Wisd. of
Sol. i. 13.

their posterity are fallen into a worse condition than had been originally prepared for them by their gracious Creator.

Death which *God made not* took possession of the world, and Guilt, and Pain have a large dominion in it; and might have stretched their empire to a dreadful extent, had not a person of Divine Nature and Attributes, united, in a manner incomprehensible with the Supreme Father of all things, been pleased, by the Father's appointment, and out of his own inconceivable goodness, to interpose in our behalf.

He came down from heaven; and still continuing to be one with the Supreme Nature, he assumed our's. He became man: he lived upon earth, did good, endured pain, preached piety and righteousness, worked wonders, suffered death as a malefactor, restored himself to life, returned to heaven, and now governs his Church by the operation of yet another
Divine

Divine Person, who with him and the Father, is one God, blessed for ever.

All this, you seem to say, is strange and wonderful. It is so. The Divine existence, eternity, infinity, which yet reason obliges us to acknowledge, is very wonderful. The divine government of the world, which we experience, is in many instances exceedingly astonishing. The world is filled with wonders; and if you attempt ignorantly to remove them, they become greater. If you deny what is strange, you must admit what is impossible.

It is strange, perhaps you think, that our first parents should commit sin. This part of the wonder, that any of *our kindred* should do what was not right, *we* must not insist on.

It is strange that they were not immediately punished with death. How! shall

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we

we make it a wonder that God is merciful? It must be a wonder then that we are living.

It is however, very strange, you are pretty sure, and hardly right, you humbly think, that their posterity should be involved in their guilt, and made to suffer for an offence that was not their own.

Now *first* of all, is it not surprising that this should appear so strange to us who have lived all our lives in a world in which the same thing has happened every day? Is any thing more common than to see men suffering the most grievous calamities, through the fault or only the folly of other persons?

But this is *natural*. And who made it to be natural? Did not he who made the world?

A great change took place at the fall :
do

do you know the particular manner in which it was effected? Can you say how far that was, or was not natural?

But, What think you of the remedy provided for this calamity, the redemption of man in Jesus Christ? of the state of happiness offered him in heaven, instead of his earthly paradise? Is not the severity of your complaint softened by these considerations?

But waving these answers, let us, for a moment suppose that these things are indeed so strange as to be incredible; that the fall and the redemption of man is all a fiction; and the world in as good a condition as it was at first, or was ever meant to be.

The *wickedness* and the *misery* that are in the world, still remain in it, after all our suppositions: these are matters of fact, alas! and must be acknowledged by

1 John v.
19.

us all, whatever opinion we entertain concerning the cause of them. The state of man, whether a fallen state or no, is what it is. Evidently *the world lieth*, in a very great degree, in wickedness; the life of men, of all men, is full of trouble, of many is so distressful that it affects us with horror, till death, very soon, the sooner often the better, puts an end to it. Man appears upon the Sea of life, struggles with waves and storms for a few moments, and sinks again into the abyfs, for ever.

And is this your vindication of God's love and goodness? This the best defence
Psal. cxlv. you can devise of those *tender mercies which*
9. *are over all his works.*

It would be severe in him, you think, to degrade us to such a sad state as this for the offence of our first Parents: but you can allow him to place us in it, without any inducement. Are our calamities

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Or will you say, that the Supreme Being was not able to accommodate us in a better manner? or that he was not desirous of doing it? that he is wholly unconcerned about us? or that he never made the world at all? and that we came into it of ourselves, or by the help of fate or fortune?

Indeed these and all other objections
c 3 against

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against the articles of revealed religion generally admit one short answer from the consideration of our own ignorance. We are not willing to acquiesce in that superficial information which is imparted to us, but are desirous to see to the bottom of every thing; and complain, or dispute, when we are disappointed: not considering that we know the whole of nothing; and that no system of religion, or of irreligion, will ever place us above these difficulties.

Whatever Almighty God is pleased to teach, or to command, by the voice of Nature, or of Revelation, it is plainly and equally our duty to believe and do: it is of no consequence which way he conveys this knowledge to us. He hath created us by his power; he hath redeemed us by his mercy, through the mediation of his Son: if there is any person to whom neither of these truths is made known, he is innocent of all guilt in the ignorance or
disbelief

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disbelief of both; and if they are both so offered to us that but for some criminal obstruction in ourselves, we should admit them; it is dangerous, and may be fatal to deny either.

There is, I fear, yet one more circumstance, in which the Christian revelation and the religion of nature bear to each other, unhappily, but too near a resemblance; and that is in their *success*; or more properly, in the *want* of it: they produce, neither of them, in any due degree, the effect they ought, the reformation of the world.

You admit, let us suppose, the religion of nature: so far you are certainly in the right. You allow that there is a God who made the world, and all things in it: therefore they are his: No doubt. He is your Father, Friend, and Lord; his relation to you is prior and superiour

to every other : his will is your support, and life, and law. This you freely own.

Yes, in words you own it. But is the sense of it impressed on your heart? are your actions governed by it? It is easy to say, in your discourse, or prayers, that Almighty God is the Greatest and Best of Beings, and to ascribe to him *the kingdom, the power, and the glory* : but doth he really rule in your breast, and in your life? Do you worship him devoutly and constantly? do you honour and love him, *with all your mind and strength*, so that no other person or thing, not even your own desires come in competition with him? Are you thankful for what he gives, content when he denies, resigned when he takes away, patient when he afflicts, humble when he advances you, and when he depresses, neither petulant nor yet dejected? If you honour and love God above all things; you will do whatever you think will please, and nothing that you know offends him.

him. And thus will be introduced into your life the whole train of virtues, whatever is *good and acceptable in the sight of God.* ^{1 Tim. ii. 3.}

Not that we *Christians* have any reason for boasting, but much for sorrow, and for amendment. Your condemnation is not our acquittal. We are bound to every one of the same things, and more; by all the same reasons, and by others: so that when we do amiss, we are even more culpable.

We believe, with you, that God made, and we believe also that he redeemed us, and this by the death of his only begotten Son; that he loved us, corrupted and lost, as we were, yet that he still loved us to such a degree, as to deliver up out of his bosom, him *in whom he was always well pleased*, to be a man, and a sacrifice, that we might be forgiven for his sufferings, and received into heaven with him, through his merits and intercession. ^{Matth. iii. 17.}

But

But have we a just sense of this redemption? Are our actions governed by the sense of it? Ask us, in your turn, every one of
 Job ix. 3. the same questions: can we *answer one of a thousand*? Where are all the graces and virtues suitable to our holy Faith, and bound upon us by so many obligations? Do our actions, any more than yours, correspond to our principles? Are we better than other persons whose belief is
 Gal. ii. 20. *different? The life which we now live in the flesh*, as the Apostle speaks, do we *live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us?*

We stand disputing and quarrelling about the religion of Nature and Revelation; but regard neither, much further than the mere profession: Zealots for a system which has no effect on our heart and life; contending each with eagerness for the articles of his faith; agreeing, on both sides, to forget the duties of it.

Alas!

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Alas! the very reverse of this is the method which reason and Christianity alike prescribe; to live every one of us according to the rules of that religion which we believe and profess, and recommend it to others by all fair arguments, and by an upright example; but by no other motives. I conclude with that short precept of the Apostle: *Follow* ^{Hebr.xii.} *peace with all men, and holiness without* ^{14.} *which no man shall see the Lord.*

S E R-

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S E R M O N III.

LUKE i. 34.

THEN SAID MARY UNTO THE ANGEL,
HOW SHALL THIS BE, SEEING I KNOW
NOT A MAN?

THE miracles attending the revelation of Christianity may be considered as divided into two classes, and called the publick miracles, and the private.

Of the former sort were the many cures performed by our Lord and his Apostles;

Apostles; the darkness at his crucifixion, his Ascension into heaven, in the presence of many spectators; prophecies of future events taken together with their accomplishment; the very propagation of the Christian religion in the world; and above all, that capital miracle, the best attested, and yet most amazing, the principal pillar on which the fabrick of Christianity rests, The *Resurrection* of the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Among the second sort, the private miracles, may be reckoned the appearance of an Angel in a dream to the husband of the Virgin Mary, more than once; the vision of Zacharias in the Temple; the divine glory seen by St. Stephen at the time of his Martyrdom; and any other supernatural events, of which there was no testimony, but that of the single person on whom the miracle was wrought, or before whom it was exhibited; and among these, especially that great miracle
of

of the *Incarnation* of our Saviour Christ, without any human father, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Now the proper external proof of the Christian religion are the publick miracles. Nay they are the proof even of the private miracles; which are so far from yielding any help to the other parts of revealed religion, that they cannot expect to gain admittance for themselves, but must be content to attend upon the miracles which were publick. And when these are established; miraculous facts of which we have no witness, and revealed doctrines of which we have no natural proof, may be ranked together; and will be both equally supported by the testimony of Scripture, which rests on the miracles that were wrought openly for the proof of it.

There does not appear to be any thing *incredible* in this doctrine of the miraculous Incarnation of Jesus Christ, to those who admit any miracles at all. That a
i child

child should come into the world without a father, is not harder to account for, than that a dead body should come to life, or a living man walk upon the water, or distempers be cured by the speaking of a word. None of these things are natural: but they are all, equally, as far as we can see, in the power of God.

Except we believe the world to have existed from eternity, and the race of mankind to have been continued down to this day by an infinite succession, without any beginning at all; we must be obliged to acknowledge that at least two human persons were once brought into being, in some way different from that which is now the established course of nature. All persons cannot have been born as men are now. The Redeemer of mankind therefore was not the only person who had not two human parents. What was once, might be again; or something equally different from

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from that which is now the object of experience.

It is not expected that this miraculous conception of our Lord should gain credit from the testimony of the mother, or from the relation of an historian. It is to the publick, undoubted, innumerable miracles of the Redeemer's life, and to his well attested Resurrection from the dead, that we appeal for the support of the miracle of his Incarnation and Birth. *If* ^{John x.} *he did not the works of his Father, believe³⁷ him not.*

But the creation of a human pair, at the beginning of the world, it may be said, was plainly necessary, and is therefore easily believed; but the birth of an infant without an earthly father is the less credible, because we see no reason for it.

Is this a proof that there was none?

D

Has

S E R M O N III.

Has the Supreme Mind no reasons but what we are acquainted with? Does the Divine wisdom take us for counsellors?

A holy and good God, as we should think, would create men in a state of virtue and happiness. But mankind we see, and feel, alas! are in a state of sin and misery. How comes this event to pass? Will any reason that you are master of, explain it to us?

We know indeed how it happened from Scripture. It was owing to the *Fall*. But the Scripture informs us also of the *Incarnation*, and tells us that the fall of man was the reason of it. Can you shew that it is not a good reason? Are you sure you could have redeemed the world better? or at all otherwise? It is written, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*: and it may be, for any thing you know to the contrary, that men could no more be *regene-
rated*

John iii.
3.

rated without this miracle of the Incarnation, than they could ever have been *born* without the other, of the Creation.

Or if you refuse the name of *miracle* to the first creation of man, because a miracle has relation to a course of nature supposed to be already established, it will make no material difference. The thing will not be changed by the alteration of the name. There is no reason to think that the creation of man required any less degree of power for being new; or that the miraculous conception, by being contrary to an established course, was therefore either impossible, or in any degree less necessary.

But when we say that Jesus, our Redeemer, was born of a virgin, who *was* Matth, i. *found with child of the Holy Ghost*; we mean^{18.} something more than that his birth was miraculous, and brought to pass by the extraordinary power of God. We intend

to declare, that *he was truly the Son of God.*

Luk i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called, that is, shall be, the Son of God.* The glorious truth which is covered under this veil of words is not, it must be acknowledged, clearly understood by us; yet are they not mere empty sounds, wholly without meaning. The very vilest weed on the sea shore is the effect of God's power, and indeed a display of his wisdom. Men are of a nobler nature: still, they are also the work of God's hand; and bearing a nearer resemblance to his perfections, and enjoying a greater portion of his care, they have been styled his children. Spirits, superior to man, may also have been called the sons of God, or even his first born, for the same reasons, and because they were in being before us. Language is imperfect,

fect, and metaphors must be much used. Angels, or certain men, may have been called even Gods, on account of their great authority and power. But still, so much we think we discern of this sublime subject, that Jesus is the Son of God, in a sense different from all these; derived from the Supreme Father, in a superiour and more immediate manner; and not only *among many brethren the firstborn*, but *among them all, the Only Begotten*.

Rom. viii.
29.
John i.
14. & al.

The Redeemer of Mankind was, and is, Man as well as God. The divine Nature was united with the human in Jesus Christ. The subject here too is, no doubt, in a vast degree, incomprehensible. Language is greatly liable to abuse, and when not abused, it is both imperfect, and apt to be mistaken. Yet the doctrine thus delivered is not merely nothing.

God is infinite: he is every where present. We live and move not only by his

Acts xvii. favour, but *in him*; so do all other Beings.

18.

Psal. *If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; If*

cxxxix.7. *I go down to hell, thou art there also.* He

upholds, penetrates, pervades, actuates all things. The most rapid cherubims move by his force: the very clods of the field cleave together by his perpetual, and, if one may so speak, personal operation. At least, the deepest philosophers have had recourse to this expedient; and, after the most wearisome researches, like the dove sent out from the ark, have found no other place where to fix their foot, but that whence they set out; no solution, but in the Divine presence, of the most trivial, as well as extraordinary appearances.

Yet, though we pretend not to comprehend either, so far we make bold to pronounce, this was not the presence of the Supreme Father with his only begotten Son; nor this the union of God with the man Christ Jesus. Stocks and stones
are

are not God: even *angels, which are greater* ^{2 Pet. ii.}
in power and might, refuse to be worship-^{11.}
 ped. But the Redeemer, though *made of* ^{8, 9.}
a woman, and *in all things like unto his* ^{Gal iv. 4.}
brethren, is the proper object of our faith, ^{Hebr. ii.}
 and hope, and love, and every other re-^{17.}
 ligious affection and action: as the Scrip-^{Acts iii.}
 ture teaches in many places. We praise ^{16.}
 him, we pray to him. We *believe in* ^{1 Cor. xv.}
God. We *believe also in him*; and *honour* ^{19.}
the Son even as we honour the Father: al-^{2 Cor. xv.}
 though we know, that *there is one God*, ^{14.}
and there is none other but he; and that *he* ^{Matth.}
will not give his glory to another. ^{xxviii. 19.}
^{Rev. xv.}
^{13. xi. 15.}
^{Acts vii.}
^{5. 9.}
^{John xiv.}
^{1.}
^{John v.}
^{23.}
^{Mark xii.}
^{32.}
^{Isai. xl. 8.}

Nor is this *hypostatical* union, because it is incomprehensible, therefore incredible also. Nor indeed does it appear to be at all more incomprehensible, than the union of our own soul and body, the conjunction of Matter and Spirit. Which yet philosophy alone, without revelation, has taught men to acknowledge: though these substances are, to our thinking, as

S E R M O N III.

incongruous as any; nor have we the least conception how they can be capable of intercourse, or any mutual operation.

That *Matter* itself should ever begin to *be*, or even but begin to *move*, is as unintelligible as any article of faith, before it is depraved by our explanations. Yet Experience assures us of the beginning of motion; though it has been disputed: what has not? And Philosophy tells us that the soul of man is immaterial. We yield our assent to these teachers, though the points have oft been controverted, and can never be comprehended. What is the reason that the difficulties which we so readily pass over in these cases, should be so insuperable in the other? Articles of faith are established, we may be bold to assert, upon as good grounds as systems of physics: as much regard is due to doctrines of religion, at least, as to those of any sect of philosophers.

Yes;

Yes ; but this regard cannot always be paid at so easy a rate. The head would often be convinced, but the heart remonstrates : the understanding might bend, but the will is stubborn. We might perhaps yield our assent to religion, but it demands obedience ; and requires not only belief, but practice. Every one of its doctrines is to be fruitful in grace and good works : and however ignorant we may be of the manner, or reasons ; we are to be well acquainted with the use.

The Word was incarnate ; he left the glory which he *had with the Father before* John xvii. *the world was*, and entered into this house⁵ of clay ; he took upon him willingly the infirmities of the human Nature : God was made man for the salvation of sinners.

Could he not have saved them with less trouble ? We say nothing. How was it possible for him to assume their nature ?

Silence

S E R M O N III.

Silence suits with ignorance. What should make him willing to do it? Here indeed we are able to answer: it was because he *loved* them. And one thing more we can comprehend, that they ought also to love him; be devoutly thankful for his incomprehensible mercy; and if there is any thing in their power which may contribute to the success of this gracious undertaking, to do it.

There may be many obscurities attending the doctrine; there is none at all in this consequence, that they who are thus redeemed, are no longer their own.
 1 Cor. vi. 20. *They are bought with a price, and ought therefore to glorify God in their body and in their spirit, which are God's.* Now doubly his: since he who made, has again purchased them to himself; and, as far as we can judge, at a much greater price.

The Incarnation of the Son of God, however incomprehensible, is the plainest
 as

as well as the strongest reason that ever was, or can possibly be offered, for gratitude towards the Supreme Father, who gave his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, for our redemption; and towards that Divine Son, who loved us, and gave himself for us: for trust in God, who having *delivered up for us* his Son, Rom.viii. cannot but *with* him also freely give us^{32.} all things: for humility and condescension to our inferiours; in obedience to the particular command, in imitation of the wondrous example of him, who being possessed of divine greatness, the *Maker* Hebr.i.2. and *Heir of all things*, yet *made himself of* Phil.ii.7. *no reputation*, took upon him the form of a^{8.} *servant*; *was made in the likeness of men*; and *being found in fashion as a man*, he *humbled himself*, and *became obedient*.

This doctrine of Christianity is a commendation of purity, directing us to reverence that human •body which he honoured by being born of a virgin; and
may

may reasonably induce us to have a very high regard, but free from superstition and idolatry, to her who was so signally favoured as to be made the Parent of the Son of God.

Lastly the incarnation of Christ is an argument for universal obedience, and the practice of all virtues. Since this was
 Tit. ii. 14. the end of his coming into the world, *to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:* and since without this, we shall not only frustrate the grace of God, but render the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on mankind, a calamity to us. Every mercy which we abuse, we
 John iii. 19. convert into a curse. *This is the condemnation,* it is an aggravation of our guilt, and will add to our punishment, *that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness.* If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; since, as you acknowledge, you know better, or at least have the means of information; therefore
 John ix. 41. your

your sin remaineth. The more gracious the divine offers, the more criminal must it be either scornfully to reject, or wickedly to pervert them. *He that despised* ^{Hebr. x.} *Moses' law, died without mercy: of how much* ^{28, 29.} *sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?*

7

S E R M O N IV.

I. C O R. i. 18.

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS TO
THEM THAT PERISH, FOOLISHNESS;
BUT UNTO US WHICH ARE SAVED IT IS
THE POWER OF GOD.

THERE is nothing, how well and
wisely soever it is ordered, by man,
or God, but exceptions may be taken
against it, by the ignorant or ill disposed;
and that very circumstance be made the
matter of complaint, which ought to be
most

Rom. ix.
33.
1 Cor. i.
23.

most of all the subject of applause and admiration. The Cross of Christ has been long *a rock of offence* in the way of unbelievers; *to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness*. A Saviour of the world who could not save himself! A Divine person relinquishing the glories of his own nature for the miseries of mortal life, and the torment of crucifixion! If the Son of God, had appeared with a splendour answerable to such a character; if he had descended visibly from heaven in a chariot of fire, and with Legions of Angels, to take vengeance on his enemies, and put his followers in possession of riches, glory, power, prosperity, and pleasure; such proposals as these would have engaged attention, all nations had been soon made proselytes; and nothing seen or heard on earth, but the most cheerful submission, and sincere thanksgivings.

This is the wisdom of man! Such a Saviour, and such salvation, would, no doubt,

doubt, in our idea have been the most proper. Alas! there is no end of our folly, when we pursue the ravings of imagination; and listen to the vanity of our wishes, instead of the voice of Reason, and the sober counsels of Experience.

Shall we conclude then, upon the strength of such a wise harangue, that Jesus could not come from God, since he neither brought these benefits, of which we are so greatly desirous, along with him; nor delivered us from sickness, sorrow, and death, and a great number of other evils, which are so grievous to us?

But if Almighty God hath not *redeemed* the world; I presume he *made* it. And hath he made it to be a state of such felicity as you require? or exempted it from the afflictions to which you object? The world itself, it seems, came from God, though it contains all these bad things: and why might not the gospel, though it does not remove them?

E

Will

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Will you say, that the world, as it came out of the hand of God, at first, was better than it is at present; and that these evils were introduced into it, on account of the *fall* of our first parents?

What you say is true: but where, pray, did you learn it? This is not an article of natural religion, but of revelation. You believe the fall of man in Adam, on the testimony of Scripture; why then will you not admit his redemption by Christ on the same Authority?

But let us suppose it to be as you have said; that man was not liable to these hardships at first, but has forfeited his happy state by his disobedience. Upon what grounds then do you insist that he should be placed again in it? Man was created happy; and became wicked. Some other situation must be sought out for him: a paradise is no place for his amendment.

Per-

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Persons who can make such high demands of happiness, must have formed their expectations, one would think, from works of God unknown to us, and worlds very different from this which we inhabit. The Maker of the earth on which we live, does not appear, by any thing we see in it, to have intended it for a place of pleasure and indulgence, but of discipline and trial; offering, together with a sufficient, but mostly moderate supply of our necessities, abundant matter for the exercise and improvement of our virtue. In this view, the world was created and redeemed with equal wisdom; and every thing in both these dispensations properly adapted to the end which God designed.

But when we seek happiness here we look for what was never found. The plant grows not in this soil. But infirmities and afflictions; pain of body and anguish of mind; cares and fears, and

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disappointments, both in the pursuit and possession of our wishes; with clamorous passions and eager appetites, impatient of denial, inflamed by indulgence; and a multitude of other evils, which no tongue can count, or medicine heal, sticking close to the life of man in all stations, and pursuing him through every period of the little, laborious interval between the cradle and the grave.

Such is the condition, in which it has seemed good to God to place us; as we all see, and feel; ordered according to his own eternal counsels, not our blind will; little accommodated to our wishes, but chosen by his unerring wisdom.

And *such a high priest also became us; was suitable to the state of such sinners; touched with the feelings of our infirmities; and in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Hebr. vii.
26.

The

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53

The cup of which we are made to drink, is offered to the Son of God, and *the captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings.* Hebr. ii. 10.

But those sufferings are also the *price of our redemption*, the consideration on account of which we sinners are received to mercy. *Without shedding of blood there is no remission; He is the propitiation of our sins.* 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Hebr. ix. 22. 1 John ii. 2.

Expiatory sacrifices were in use from the earliest times, and were expressly required by Almighty God of the nation of the Jews. This Divine Person, therefore, that he might *have somewhat much more valuable to offer*, assumed *a body that was prepared for him*, and offered himself as a *Lamb without spot*, to God. He had no sins of his own to expiate: but, regardless of pleasure, ease, and life, and moved by the most exalted devotion to God, and unbounded charity to man, he gave his side to the spear, he stretched out his arms

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upon the cross; and made *a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.*

But you would be glad to know the reasons of these wonderful counsels, and comprehend the whole mystery of man's redemption.

Do you comprehend the other plans of Providence in so complete and masterly a manner? Is this the only counsel of God which eludes your inquiry?

God hath been pleased to give life, you see, to other creatures on earth besides man: did he intend them to be happy? are they always so? can any of them ever have deserved to be otherwise?

Perhaps they were made for man. But why must they *die* in order to sustain him? It is written that *man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth*

ceedeth out of the mouth of God: why did he not speak this word? What! was there no support to be found for him in the magazines of omnipotence, but by the slaughter of so many victims? unwilling victims?

What say you to this part of the Divine government? Do you choose to censure it? Are you able to explain it?

You see your own children perhaps ruined by your vices; then ask if it be possible that any person should suffer but for his own offences. Or rather, I hope, you see them become virtuous and happy by your care and kindness; and no longer wonder to be told that when they and you are made partakers together of life eternal, you will all be indebted for so great a blessing to something further than your own endeavours to obtain it.

2 Cor. v.
19.

The doctrine, that *God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, mysterious as it must ever appear to the eye of Curiosity, opens to the ingenuous heart reflexions of the highest importance. And who may take upon him to say, that so great an use was not even among the reasons of this awful dispensation?

The redemption of mankind by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, is the greatest proof of divine Mercy; and, at the same time, to a noble, nay, to any mind, the greatest discouragement to vice, that is possible to be conceived by man; the strongest obligation that is in all nature to gratitude, the sublimest and most forcible inducement to repentance.

Believe then that the Almighty Father delivered up his only begotten, for this very end, to shew us in their full light, both the unbounded extent of his goodness, and the inexpressible danger of our
impe-

impenitence: to teach to poor fallen man, the love, and the fear of him that made him. In the chain of being descending from heaven to earth, the baleful effects even of human vice are felt higher than all our conceptions can reach. *God is love*: there is nothing he is not willing to do for his creatures; yet obstinate disobedience can frustrate all the efforts of omnipotent goodness. *What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son. If we sin willfully* ^{Hebr. x.} *after that we have received this knowledge of* ^{26.} *the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation.*

As the proofs of God's grace and goodness are multiplied, so is the dread of his displeasure increased; and this on a double account: the condemnation is more certain, the punishment more terrible.

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of ^{Rom. xi.} *God: behold them brought near to us* ^{22.}
now,

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now by the death of Christ, and spread out to an amazing magnitude: see, what he has prepared for the sin of man! how rich a ransom! what tremendous vengeance! He offers you the choice of either.

We accept, Lord, thy tender of grace;
 Rom. viii. 29. and are willing *to be conformed to the image of thy Son*: embracing whatever
 Hebr. iii. 14. sufferings thou art pleased to allot, *that we may be made partakers of Christ*. We trace his steps through this vale of tears; without impatience, yet pressing forward; not complaining of labour, yet desirous of rest. We are encompassed with troubles, but our eye is fixt on immortality;
 Ps. ii. 11. we suffer, in hope; and *rejoice with trembling*.

And oh! When he who once appeared in the form of a servant, and died as a malefactor and a slave, shall come again with power, and arrayed with his Father's glory, then also may we *be like him; if so be that*

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that we suffer with him, may we be glorified Rom.viii.
together. Let us never be found among ¹⁷
those truly-miserable, who *have their por-* Ps. 17. 14.
tion of happiness in this life; those utterly
lost, for whom *Christ is dead in vain;* that Gal. ii,
ungrateful impious number, who *refuse* ^{21.} Hebr. xii,
him that speaketh whether on earth or from ^{25.} Acts xx,
heaven; and whose guilt and condemnation ^{28.}
are but the more increased, by all that
God hath done, and God hath suffered for
their salvation.

S E R.

7

S E R M O N V.

A C T S ii. 31.

HIS SOUL WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL, NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION.

WHEN the Saviour of the world had now been suspended, with his arms stretched out, and his hands and feet nailed to the ignominious tree, from the third to the ninth hour; he perceived at length the approach of that welcome messenger, Death; and having
re-

John xix. *received the vinegar, He said, It is finished:*
30. *and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

It is finished. The important work, for which my Father sent me, and I came willingly into the world, is at last accomplished. I have done, and have now suffered, the whole will of God. The bitter cup which might not pass away from me, is emptied to the dregs. It remains that I repose a moment after this painful conflict. I will appear on the third day with the palm of victory, and again in the pomp of triumph at the day of judgment.

Matth.
xxvi. 42.

The Redeemer had no further sufferings, that we know of, to endure after his death. It is written that *his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.* But nothing is more common in Scripture than a repetition of the same sentiment in different words. The word Soul often denotes the *Person*, without regard to the distinction between Soul and Body, and that which is here render-

ed *hell*, may mean the *grave*, or the state and place of the dead, without implying either reward or torment.

The human soul of our Lord was by death separated from the Body; and remained, till his resurrection, in the place or state of unclothed Spirits.

But, it's abode there was not long. The departed Soul, and the crucified Body of the Redeemer were soon reunited; and, according to his own express promise, on the third day he rose again from the dead. The witnesses of this important event are competent, clear, and full.

They who of all men had the best knowledge of the person of Christ, did themselves *see*, and *hear*, and *handle* him after his resurrection. *Of these men which* ^{Acts i. 21,} *have companied with us all the time that the* ^{22.} *Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that*
same

same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained, to be a witness with us of his resurrection. They had been his attendants for some years before his passion; and conversed with him forty days after it. They do not amuse us with imaginations or conjecture: it is not a matter of tradition or probability which they deliver.

1 John i.
1. 3.

But, That which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled of the word of life, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. The Apostles had the repeated evidence of every sense, for the truth of the fact which they published to the world: and if they assure us that their Lord is risen indeed; it is because he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs.

Luke
xxiv. 34.
Acts i. 3.

The witnesses of our Lord's resurrection were also numerous. *He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of five hundred brethren at once: what an air of truth in the words that follow! Of*
whom

1 Cor. xv.
5, 6.

whom the greater part remain unto this present. It is obstinacy then, or vice, or folly, or any thing but reason that supports us, if we refuse to yield our assent, when *we are compassed about with so great* Hebr. xii. 1. *a cloud of witnesses.*

Nor are we yet possessed of the entire amount of their testimony, unless we reflect that they were most undoubtedly *uncorrupt*. To what end, for what purpose should they attempt to impose upon mankind? what interests or views of their own were these poor men pursuing? At what scope could they possibly aim? Or by what human principle be influenced?

Perhaps *Ambition*. Yes; you have detected their latent passion: they were indeed ambitious; aspiring to the great, but yet unenvied honour, of suffering in the cause of God; the dignity of bearing contempt and insult, for the sake of religion, truth, and virtue. *When they had called the* Acts v.

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Apostles, 40, 41.

Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus: and they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name; Unto you it is given, as a peculiar favour and Phil. i. 29. honour, Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

Or it was *pleasure* perhaps those foolish persons had in view, and the plan of Christianity was projected as a scheme of sensual enjoyment. Foolish indeed! if this was the object of their pursuits. Their pleasures were as little desirable as their honours. The only pleasures they expected, or experienced, beside the satisfaction of a good conscience, and the hopes of another life, were the pleasures of being scourged and beaten, of being imprisoned, and tortured, and killed.

1 Cor. xv. 19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

Not

Not only miserable, but impious, and mad, to abandon their friends, and family, and country; for the pleasure of spreading a known falshood, and the reward of dying, both in body and soul, for the support of it.

But what Sceptic was ever fatisfied? What caviller confuted? The adversaries of our faith finding no further resources on the plain ground of common sense, make their last retreat into the thorns of subtilty.

The resurrection, it seems, was an event so strange, that no testimony whatever is enough to prove it: the story, we may be sure, is not true; whoever he be that tells it.

On what foundation pray, do you build an assurance so very absolute?

On the foundation of Experience.

As how?

I am to tell you, then, that we know nothing of the essence of *causality*; but found all our assent upon *similitude*.

I am not sure that I comprehend you.

You cannot be possessed of so fine an argument in its perfection, without having recourse to the original Inventor: it may suffice to let you know in brief, that we believe always what is most *likely*, and call that most likely, which most resembles what we have before met with.

But things often fall out that were not likely.

Yes; so often, that we find it, in general, likely that they should; and in each particular case reflect which of the two is less likely, that the thing should be as it is represented, or the reporter represent it falsely.

Have

S E R M O N V.

69

Have you ever found in the course of your experience that any thing was not true, which had been as well attested as the resurrection?

It was a miracle: experience therefore, universal experience declares against it.

That of the *five hundred brethren* who saw it, was, sure, on the other side. ^{1 Cor. xv. 6,}

You must appeal to present experience. Nature we find unchangeable.

Nature! When I dispute with you about Christianity, I suppose that you believe a God.

You suppose perhaps too fast.

Then I have no further dispute with you: I leave you to other hands. Christianity desires no greater honour than to be received by every one that is not an Atheist.

S E R M O N V.

Suppose there be a God: what then?

Why, then he made the world.

Well.

And a multitude of things must have been done at that time of the Creation, which are not comprehended within the present course of nature. Every animal, every vegetable, must have been brought into Being at first in some manner of which the world now affords no examples. Of this we have no experience, yet we allow it to be true; and we need no testimony, for we know it must have happened.

And if the Son of God were to assume our nature a second time, and be once more *crucified, and buried*; according to the unalterable laws of the Universe, he must rise again from the grave, and *the pains of death be loosed as before, because it*
was

was not POSSIBLE; that he should be holden of it.

The opinion that this present life is the whole of man, that death puts an entire end to his Being, and there can be nothing for any one to hope or fear after it, is of all the most contrary to religion, and destructive to virtue. This great error is in a special manner confuted by our Lord's resurrection; and the doctrine of a future state established beyond the reach of controversy.

He had indeed taken care, during his life, to inculcate a truth of so much consequence, and confirm it both by his authority and by arguments. *Be not* Luke xii. *afraid of them that kill the body, and after⁴ that have no more that they can do. He is* Luke xx. *not a God of the dead, but of the living: for³⁸ all live unto him.* But our Lord has now demonstrated this article of faith to the senses of mankind; and by raising him-
F 4
self

S E R M O N V.

self to life he gave at the same time a proof and a specimen of the great doctrine he had before delivered. Do we disregard his testimony? are his arguments not convincing? yet what can we object to so plain a fact? shall we dispute also against experience?

We are taught further to expect the resurrection of the *body*. The light of reason has been able to induce many good men to look for another life after death. But they did not extend their hopes to the resurrection of the body. They only trusted that they should not perish wholly, but their souls might survive the dissolution of this earthly frame. We now see that the body also shall be partaker of the life to come. The hand of death, though it lays hold on us, can keep nothing which belongs to us. The exquisite knot, so rudely broken, shall be tied again, never to be dissolved more.

Luke
xxiv. 39.

Behold my hands and my feet; that it is I myself:

myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

The *dominion* of our Lord is also connected with his resurrection; which was his entrance, as it were, upon his universal government. *All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. To this end* Matth. xxviii. 18 Rom. xiv. *Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

Lastly, that most important article of faith, a *future judgment*, is confirmed by the resurrection of our Lord; who is the appointed judge, to whom this high office is committed in reward of his great humiliation; and whose own return to life, and exaltation to power and glory, is the greatest instance, and the surest pledge of the just judgment of God. *As the Father* John v. 21, 22, 25, 26, 27. *raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgement unto the Son. The hour is coming*

S E R M O N V.

coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

S E R M O N VI.

H E B R. ii. 10.

FOR IT BECAME HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

TH O S E are commonly the fittest persons to command, who have before learned to obey. Men are best qualified for places of authority by subjection.

jection. 'Tis in this School they learn to bend their stubborn will, to break the impetuosity and fierceness so natural to the human mind, and acquire that patience of restraint, which is both becoming and useful in every condition of life, and most of all in the highest. Being thus made acquainted with the difficulties of those duties which they are authorized to enjoin, they become the more equitable in their commands, reserved in their censures, and gentle in their punishments. Nor can it well be expected that any thing less than a long course of rigid discipline should be able to produce such a permanent principle of moderation as will be always wanted amidst the means, and solicitations of indulgence.

Accordingly we may observe that, as the race of mankind, being intended for a higher station among the works of their Creator, are trained up for it by the trials and troubles of which the world is full;
so

so also many a particular person, whom God hath designed to raise in this present life to an extraordinary degree of greatness, has in the wisdom of his Providence been exercised by a series of afflictions, as remarkable as that advancement to which they have conducted him.

You call to mind the example of that virtuous Youth, who became the support of the old Patriarch's family, Lord of all the land of Egypt, and a Father to Pharaoh; but not till he had first tasted of the bitter cup of adversity, and seen himself both a prisoner and a slave.

You cast your eye upon that forlorn fugitive, who escapes alone and naked from a house surrounded by assassins; he is pursued from one wilderness to another, and *hunted* (it is his own word) through all the mountains of Israel, by one who has been indebted for victory to his valour, and to his mercy for life; till he

he is driven to seek shelter amongst the enemies he had vanquished, and to assume the mask of madness: yet is he still the anointed of the Lord; destined to be the Prince of his chosen people, and the Father of the Son of God.

And that very Son himself, though he had no evil habits to eradicate, nor stubborn heart to tame; though in no danger of being corrupted by power, or tempted in any state of exaltation to refuse the counsels of moderation and mercy; yet was he made conformable to the common pattern, and went up to the throne of his Father by the same steps of sorrow.

Labour, want, and pain, are the beaten road to greatness. And *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings:* To conduct him to his supreme dominion, through a previous
state

state of humiliation and sorrow; and deal with him, though not for the same reasons, yet in the same manner as with those whom he *is not ashamed to call brethren.* Hebr. ii. 11.

He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. If the purification of his own heart had been the end proposed, all his sufferings had been superfluous. He was ever decked with the *Robe of righteousness.* 1 Pet. ii. 22. It was not necessary thus to clothe him with *the vesture dipped in blood.* Isai. lxi. 10.
Rev. xix. 13.

But *though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* Hebr. v. 8. He was made acquainted with the severest trials of virtue; called to submission in it's hardest instances. He was taught by his own experience and feeling how painful the passage is through the storms of human life: how difficult that discipline by which the children of God are trained up to happiness. And *being made perfect* Hebr. v. 9.
hav-

Matth.
xxviii.
18.

having finished his course of afflictions, and possessing the reward of them, his place at the right hand of God, the exercise of all *power in heaven and in earth*; *he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*. He governs the church which is yet left behind him upon earth; and by his word and ordinances, his Providence and Spirit he conducts all those who are willing to be thus led, along the same road, to the same place whither he is gone before: That being first made *conformable to his death*, they may become *partakers of his resurrection*; and following him through the paths of pain and trouble, may join in his triumphant ascension, and that *where he is they may be also*.

Since then the Son of God incarnate was made to pass through a state of very severe sufferings, before he ascended up into heaven; and since his saints and servants have in this respect been required

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to tread in his steps; we cannot but *know* what our lot is like to be in going through the same world.

Nor should we only learn to look for afflictions; we should be *willing* to find them, when we reflect that they have fallen so largely to the share of so many persons, better than ourselves, and of the Son of God himself.

Nay, we should be even *thankful* for our sufferings, did we consider the ends for which they are inflicted on us, and the great good we receive from them.

It was indeed on *our* account, that the Redeemer submitted to so low a state of humiliation and sorrow. He had no depravities of heart to atone for, or to correct. Still, he died; for our admonition, and encouragement; for the confirmation of our faith; and for the expiation of our sins. And yet, even to himself, his sufferings

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ferings were not without very valuable fruits, the increase both of his honour, and happiness, by the gratitude and salvation of a world of sinners. He could not proceed to his glorious resurrection, and the triumph of his ascension, but through the gate of death. The very dominion which he now exercises over all things that are in heaven and earth is the purchase of his own condemnation before the tribunal of an unjust judge.

Phil. ii. 8, *He became obedient unto death. Wherefore*
 9, 10. *God also hath highly exalted him, and given*
 John v. *him a name which is above every name; that*
 27. *at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of man.*

But the sufferings which to him were only glorious, are necessary to us. Our condition requires this treatment. We are sick of a disease which will yield to
 no

no other application. Into what excesses should we not run headlong without this seasonable restraint ! Humanity, Moderation, Charity, and even Justice, are too seldom seen in the world, as it is : but the very footsteps of these virtues would not be visible upon the earth, if Adversity were banished out of it. Eager Appetites, clamorous Passions, hearken to no other call. The voice of Reason cannot reach them. As full of unhappiness as the world is, men still find courage to be wicked : and the little of virtue that yet remains among us, is chiefly owing to this salutary discipline.

We thank God, perhaps, when we do thank him, for prosperity ; for health, plenty, success and honour. We do well. They are the gifts of God's Providence, and demand our acknowledgements. But they are not the only blessings his goodness confers on us. Adversity should be added to the number of his favours,

and remembered in our most devout thanksgivings.

Blessed be God for pain, sickness, disappointment, distress; and every one of those various evils with which the life of man is filled, and which are the subjects of our hasty complaints: Evils, which are our greatest good; which afflict but purify, tear and harrow up the soul, but prepare it for the seeds of virtue.

Blessed be God that he is not so unkind as to try us by the most dangerous of all temptations, uninterrupted prosperity: That we are not undone by the accomplishment of our wishes: That he is pleased to chastise us with his legitimate children, and with his dear and only begotten Son, Whom we hope to follow through the gate of the grave to a joyful resurrection; and to be received by him into those mansions which he is now
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preparing for us in heaven; where he liveth and reigneth, with the Father and Holy Spirit, one God, 'world without end.

S E R M O N VII.

I. T H E S. iv. 14.

FOR IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED,
AND ROSE AGAIN; EVEN SO THEM
ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS, WILL
GOD BRING WITH HIM.

EVERY command of Almighty
God our Creator has a right, no
doubt, to our obedience; and every truth
which comes down from the *Father of*
lights, demands our assent. Yet as our

Matth.
xxiii. 23.

Lord directs us to distinguish between the *weightier matters of the Law*, which are to be done first, and the other parts of it, which however, are *not to be left undone*; so have we ground to put a difference among articles of faith: there being some capital doctrines in religion, which require our belief more indispensably than others, and more amply reward our meditations.

Of these the principal are that Christ died for our sins, that he rose from the dead, and that he will come again to judgment.

Rom. iii.
25.

Matth.
xx. 28.

In his *death*, he is set forth as a *propitiation*; as he declares of himself, that he came to give his life a ransom for many.

Acts xvii.
31.

By his *resurrection*, he gave full proof of the truth of all his doctrines, and particularly of his future return to judgment; as it is written. God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in right-

righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

The *future judgment* is the completion of his office, in the final distribution of rewards and punishments; offering to our view, both that *terror of the Lord* so *2 Cor. v.* efficacious in dissuading men from sin; ^{11.} and those *exceeding great and precious promises*, by which we are made partakers of the *divine nature*; for we know that when he *1 John iii.* shall appear, we shall be like him; for we ^{2.} shall see him as he is.

If we believe that *Jesus died, and rose* *1 Thes. iv.* again, even so them also which sleep in *Jesus* ^{14.} will God bring with him.

But both the high rank of these articles in a Christian's faith, and their connexion with each other, are shewn together by St. Paul in the 15th Chapter of his

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his first Epistle to the Corinthians; where he ushers them in with much solemnity, and dignifies them with the name of the *Gospel*; as if all he had written before, through so many pages, had been, in comparison, no part of it. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The gospel which I preach I*
 Gal. i. 12. *had from Christ. The first thing he taught me was this, That he died for the sins of men; and the second, that, being buried, he rose again. Now if Christ rose*
 1 Cor. xv. *from the dead, how say some among you that*
 12. 14. *there is no resurrection of the dead? Then is*
 our

our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Our religion is worth nothing without these parts of it. If in this life ^{ver. 19.} *only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

So that the great Proof of a future judgment, is the declaration of Scripture : the testimony of our Lord, who is himself the Judge, and by the many wonders of his life, and his glorious resurrection from the dead, hath given the most ample demonstration, that he is able to fulfil his promises, and execute his threatenings; and that *when the Son of man shall* ^{Matth. xxv. 31,} *come in his glory, and all the holy angels with* ^{32.} *him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him.*

This proof from *Scripture* has the advantage of being at the same time universally intelligible, and decisive; level to the capacity of the lowest among the
vulgar,

vulgar, and satisfactory to the most scrupulous in the School of philosophy.

But there are also other arguments, suggested by the voice of *Reason*, in number not few, and in weight, taken all together, very considerable; tending, each according to its strength, to raise in us, the thoughts, or hopes, or expectation of another life, and a judgment to come.

The *universality* of this persuasion, may be urged here with the same propriety as it is alleged in proof of the being of God; and, if the persuasion be equally general, with the same force. For so universal a concurrence in the sentiments of mankind must either be owing to some original revelation, or else must arise from the suggestions of nature, and the plain principles of reason. The seeds of this belief must have been mixed with the very mould of which we were made, since they are so apt to shoot up in every breast.

But

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But besides this secondary kind of argument, which we draw from the concurrent sentiments of mankind; those very suggestions of nature or principles of reason which have been sufficient to prevail with others, will themselves also deserve *our* attention.

The human soul, being endowed with the powers of perception and will, so remote from all the known qualities of matter, or even inconsistent with them, appears to be immaterial; and by consequence, not being capable of division or dissolution of parts, must be naturally immortal.

So much, at least, is evident; that That which thinks in man, of whatever it consists, does not necessarily cease to be, whenever it ceases to act, or when its operations cease to be visible. Of which the suspension of thinking during sleep, if there be a suspension, is a proof. It is
certain,

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certain, however, that some persons have returned to life, and to the perfect consciousness of their own identity, after a cessation for hours, and even days, of all the discernible tokens of thought or action.

But there are considerations of a moral kind which lead towards the same conclusion. We are conscious to ourselves of good and ill desert, in the practice of virtue and the commission of vice. We know it is fit and proper that rewards and punishments should be distributed to such creatures as men, according to their behaviour. We are all sensible in our hearts that this is right; and may deny, but cannot doubt it.

Experience also assures us that this is done, to a considerable degree, in the state in which we are placed at present. We in fact live under a moral government, by the constitution of things, that
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is, by the appointment of God. He is therefore a moral governour over us, rewarding virtue; and punishing vice.

This character of the Supreme Being recommends him to our approbation. We believe him to be true, and good, and just; and honour him the more for being so.

Still this moral government of God, in the present state, is not perfect; being obstructed by various impediments, which yet do not appear to have been designed by him, in the same manner as the causes are designed which promote that moral government. Notwithstanding all the tendency of virtue to happiness, there have been good men, good at least in comparison of others, to appearance unhappy; and bad men whose vicious practice has not yet rendered them miserable. Will the Almighty permit such a defect to remain in his works?
such

such inequalities to go unrectified for ever?

Or may we not rather hope, that this life is not the whole of man? But there will come after it another state, in which the distinction between the good and bad will be made more conspicuous and complete; and even a peculiar regard be had to the want of this distinction in the present life, so far as it has been wanting?

This is a short abstract of the argument for a future state, and just judgment to come, as it appears by the light of nature: *a light shining but in a dark place, till the day dawned, and the sun of righteousness arose.*

2 Pet. i. 19.
Mal. iv. 2.

But if unhappily all our arguments be ineffectual, if still there be found some minds too dull to discern, or too disputatious to admit their validity; we have yet

yet in reserve one method by which every person, let his capacity or turn of mind be what it will, may bring himself infallibly to the full belief of this great article of our religion: and it is this, let him be a *good man*. Let him do what he knows in his conscience to be his duty, whether any one will ever bring him to account for the discharge of it, or not: Let him learn not to fear the inspection of a heavenly eye: Let him be just such a person as he ought to be, if it were certain he should be called to judgment; and we may be bold to pronounce that his scruples will soon vanish. *If any man will* John vii.
do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine ^{17.}
whether it be of God. This method will help him wonderfully to see the force of arguments; and make him *wiser than the* ^{Pf. cxix.}
aged because he keeps the commandments. ^{98.} It will do more towards the confirmation of his belief than the most persevering study of philosophy, or even of the Holy Scriptures: and it will, besides, do that for him

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which

S E R M O N VII.

Jude
xxiv.

which belief cannot do: it will save him. It will exceed the knowledge of mysteries, or gift of tongues, or power of working miracles. It will place him before the presence of his Judge *with exceeding joy*; and through the mercy of Almighty God, the grace of his Spirit, and the mediation of his Son, secure to him the possession of that bliss which others indeed of greater ingenuity or eloquence, might prove with more exactness, or preach with more power; but which the good alone have the wisdom to obtain.

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S E R M O N VIII.

R O M. xv. 13.

NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH
ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING,
THAT YE MAY ABOUND IN HOPE
THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY
GHOST.

IT is not only true, that there is a God
who made us; it is a truth to which
we are bound to give assent.

Is it not a duty to be grateful? God
hath

hath given us all we have; and should we
 Job xxxv. 11. not thank him for it? He *teacheth us more
 than the beasts of the earth*: and will he not
 require that we know more? He speaks
 to us loudly in all his works: are we at
 Job xxviii. 26. liberty not to hear? *When he made a decree
 for the rain, and a way for the lightening of
 the thunder; unto man he said, Behold the fear
 of the Lord, that is wisdom*: and can we
 be innocent when we do not fear him?
 On this subject, inattention is vice; and
 ignorance depravity. As it is written,
 Jer. ix. 5. 6. *They have taught their tongue to speak lies:
 through deceit they refuse to know me, saith
 the Lord.*

This belief of the Being of God is also
 most highly favourable to the cause of
 virtue, or even absolutely necessary to it:
 and atheism strengthens every temptation
 to what is evil. Naked we stand, and
 Eph. vi. 16. open to *all the fiery darts of the wicked one,*
 having cast away *the shield of faith*, and
 put off *the whole armour of God.*

Secondly,

Secondly, Let us now suppose that, as we were originally created by Almighty God, so we have been redeemed by his Son: That we had fallen from a state of happiness by the sin of our first parents; and were become liable for our own offences also to further degrees of our Maker's displeasure, and to everlasting condemnation: That this Divine Person interposed in our behalf, took upon him our nature, and in a human body bore the punishment due to our offences; thus putting it into our power to be restored to God's favour, and again made partakers of bliss eternal.

Is not this instance similar to the preceding? may not faith be as much a duty in the one case, as in the other? according to the words of our Lord, *Ye believe in* John xiv.
God; believe also in me. 1.

It is of no importance in this question *which way* the knowledge is conveyed, but

whether it be in *fact* conveyed to us. The voice of God in his *works* is, in ten thousand instances continually, unheard; and as often, when it is heard, disregarded. But we are much to blame for our negligence, and more for our obstinacy. It is the same with his *word* addressed to us in the Holy Scriptures; provided it be loud enough to be heard if we attend, and plain enough to be understood if we be docile. In short, from a willing mind, and a good disposition his commands will meet with regard in both cases; from men of other principles, in neither.

The benefit which the Christian Revelation proposes to us certainly deserves a serious thought. This is the least respect we can pay, to an offer of everlasting life. We know that we are sinners, as surely as we know that we were born; and if sinners, liable to God's wrath. When we are told therefore that we may be reconciled to our Maker, and restored to
his

his love and favour for ever; is it not worth while to consider whether this be true, and how it may be done? Inquiry then is plainly our duty; in a matter of such importance, *serious* inquiry; in one where so many prejudices are concerned, *impartial*. If then serious and impartial inquiry will produce conviction, conviction is a duty; and unbelief a sin.

And as it was observed of the belief of a God, so this faith in Christ is not only right in itself, but also highly beneficial to the believer. The Christian religion is a school of virtue.

The redemption of men by the Son of God, with the doctrine of a future judgment to be executed by that Divine Person, who came down from heaven, to be crucified, in order that he might deliver us from death eternal, is the strongest argument that was ever urged, or that can be conceived to make men good. It

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has an efficacy proper to work upon every disposition; to restrain the rash, to recover the fallen, to confirm the wavering, to soften the obdurate, to awe the presumptuous, to encourage and animate the desponding and weak, and to improve and exalt the virtuous and good of every degree to perfection.

But, Thirdly, there is also still another Person, of Divine Nature; another, and yet united with the Son and Father, in a manner intimate beyond all other union, and inconceivable by mortal men; whose concurrence is equally necessary to our
 1 Cor. xii. salvation, since *no man can say that Jesus is*
 3. *the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*; to whom all Christians are dedicated in baptism;
 Matth. *Goye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptiz-*
 xxviii. 19. *ing them in the name of the Father, and of*
the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; in whose
 2 Cor. xiii. name Christians are solemnly blessed, *The*
 14. *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of*
God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be
 e with

with you all; who is so united with the Supreme Father, as the Spirit of a man is with himself, for what man knoweth the ^{1 Cor. ii. 11.}
things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God; who by dwelling in Christians, makes them the temple of God, Know ye not that ye are the ^{1 Cor. iii. 16.}
temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Ye are builded together for ^{Eph. ii. 22.}
an habitation of God through the Spirit; by whom all good persons are led, comforted, ^{Rom. viii. 14.}
sanctified, and sealed unto the day of redemption; and by whom together with the ^{John xiv. 16, 17.}
Father and the Son the whole body of ^{2 Thes. ii. 13.}
the church is upheld and governed, for ^{Eph. iv. 30.}
there are diversities of gifts but the same ^{1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.}
Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; diversities of operations, but it is the same God; which worketh all in all. Now if it be thus discovered to us, that there exists besides, and yet together with the Son and Father, a third Divine Person, to whom we are indebted for so many,

many, and such blessings; can we be any longer at liberty whether we will acknowledge him or no?

The manner in which we receive intimation of these benefits also is not material; whether by divine revelation, or by experience, reason, or human testimony. For the obligation arises from the importance of the benefits, and the degree, not the kind of evidence we have of them. It is our part to attend with reverence, and inquire with diligence, and decide with fairness: and if such an examination would end in assent; assent is our duty; disobedience is impiety, and unbelief a crime exactly like that of atheism.

As it is thus a necessary duty to believe in the Holy Ghost, so this faith also will be of great advantage to us; and, together with our belief in the Father and Son, contribute powerfully to the satisfaction of our minds, and to our advancement in all goodness.

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That there is often difficulty in acting rightly, is plain matter of experience. If you cannot admit that man wants any degree of *uprightness* which he ever possessed; he wants at least that which, if he had it, would be a great blessing to him. Passions and appetites seduce him often from his interest; his interest itself sometimes from his duty.

The natural disposition is different, no doubt, in different persons: but in no person does it appear to be accommodated to the practice of virtue in the manner that is absolutely the best. An improper education, and the corrupt state of the world into which we are born, have perverted us still further, even very early. But we who are grown up, have also, all of us, disordered our own appetites, affections, passions, by irregular gratifications, and broken the balance of our internal constitution, by imprudent indulgences. Where is the person who can say, he has
not

not betrayed the authority of Conscience, that Vicegerent of God within; but on the contrary has supported it in the pre-eminence to which it is justly intitled, and by an uniform obedience rendered it's power as absolute, as it's right is unquestionable?

In this state therefore of difficulty in the discharge of what we feel to be our duty, and know to be our happiness; must not any offer of help be embraced with alacrity, any hopes of it cherished with joy, and every probable direction to obtain it, received with gratitude, and pursued with earnestness?

Luke xi.
13.

If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Eph. vi.
12.

We wrestle not, not only, against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers,

powers, those infernal Beings who have usurped so large a share in the dominion of this wicked and deluded world. And our defence is proportioned to the danger: but, like the servant of the man of God, we are blind to our own strength. Behold an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots; and he said, Alas! my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and behold the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

The presence of Almighty God every where, has always been urged, and justly, as a powerful argument to withhold men from the commission of sin. But the object is brought still nearer to the eye, and acquires a prodigious magnitude from this article of a Christian's faith, That the Divine Spirit, one Person of the
most

most sacred Trinity, inhabits within him;
 1 Cor. vi. and that his *body is the Temple of the Holy*
 19. *Ghost.*

He pretends not to understand the divine goodness, any more than to deserve it. One thing he knows, that it becomes
 1 Pet. i. him, so much the more, to *be holy in all*
 15. *manner of conversation and godliness. He*
 1 John iii. *that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as*
 3. *he is pure.*

He reflects that he is now a debtor, not
 Rom. viii. 12, *to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye*
 13. *live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye*
through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the
body, ye shall live; that every sin is offensive
to his heavenly guest; and every habit of
it incompatible with his presence: that
the pollutions of the world, and the de-
ceits of it, are alike repugnant to the
Spirit of truth and purity: they profane
the temple of God, and drive out the
Divinity from within him.

Blessed

S E R M O N VIII.

111

Blessed Lord! who may stand in thy sight? We tremble to reflect on thy transcendant goodness; and contemplate our own happiness with terrour.

Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Luke v.
Lord. Or rather, come, and purify, and^{8.}
 prepare an habitation for thyself. Burn
 up every inordinate affection, kindle every
 holy desire with the *brightness of thy pre-* Ps. xviii.
sence. Thyself make us such, that thou^{12.}
 mayest delight to dwell within us; and John xvii.
 that we may be one with thee, our Cre-^{21. 23.}
 ator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for ever. John xiv.
^{23.}
^{1 John ii.}
^{24.}

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S E R M O N IX.

I. JOHN iii. 24.

AND HE THAT KEEPETH HIS COMMANDMENTS, DWELLETH IN HIM, AND HE IN HIM; AND HEREBY WE KNOW THAT HE ABIDETH IN US, BY THE SPIRIT WHICH HE HATH GIVEN US.

THE Scriptures in many places speak of the Holy Spirit as abiding in believers.—*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of Rom.viii. God dwell in you; now if any man have not the⁹.*

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Spi-

- John xiv. *Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. I will pray the*
 16, 17. *Father, and he shall give you another Com-
 forter, that he may abide with you for ever,
 even the Spirit of truth; he dwelleth with you,*
 1 Cor. iii. *and shall be in you. Know ye not that ye are*
 16. *the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God*
 Eph. ii. *dwelleth in you? — All the building fitly*
 22. *framed together groweth unto an holy Temple*
in the Lord; in whom you also are builded
together for an habitation of God through the
 John iii. *Spirit. — Except a man be born of water and*
 5. *of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom*
 Rom. viii. *of God. — As many as are led by the Spirit of*
 14. *God, they are the sons of God. Sanctifica-*
tion is represented not as being exactly
the same thing with the inhabitation of
God's Spirit, but the effect of it; as being
 1 Cor. vi. *his work. — Such were some of you: but ye*
 11. *are washed, but ye are sanctified, — in the*
name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of
 1 Pet. i. 2. *our God. — Elect according to the foreknow-*
ledge of God the Father, through Sanctification
of the Spirit unto obedience.

Nei-

Neither is it probable that the presence of the Holy Ghost thus spoken of, is to be understood of any favour peculiar to the first ages of the gospel, or confined to some few among the number of good Christians. The phrases now recited bear the face of a more extended signification, and seem to promise a general blessing.

Yet many serious persons pretend to no experience of this : and that experience which has been alleged in several ages, and particularly in our own, seems to be attended with difficulties: the proofs not altogether unexceptionable; the circumstances sometimes suspicious: to the creating of doubt and uneasiness in believers; and to the scorn of infidels.

But surely we need not be reminded that Christians may have the assistance of the Spirit of God, without the power of working miracles. The very readiness to receive the Gospel, even in the first age

1 Cor. xii. of it, is ascribed to his operation; *no man*
 3. *can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the*
 1 Cor. xvi. *Holy Ghost. — A great door, says St. Paul,*
 9. *and effectual was opened unto me. — It is*
 Acts xvi. *written of Lydia, whose heart the Lord*
 14. *opened, that she attended unto the things which*
were spoken.

Often indeed the presence of the Divine Spirit was in those days visible in miraculous works: which is not so now. Nor is this altogether unaccountable.

The Father of all dispenses his blessings to his children with a kind of sparing liberality; never bestowing less than is necessary; seldom much more than is sufficient. In the beginning of the Gospel-age, when the world was to be converted to a faith, that opposed the reigning prejudices and interests of mankind; the preachers were furnished with proportionable abilities, and the *demonstration of*
 1 Cor. ii. *the Spirit, was that of power.* But as soon
 4. as

as Christianity by these supernatural means was spread abroad in the world, and men were disposed to receive the Gospel with less aversion: the powers which were no longer necessary were no longer given. By degrees they became more rare and less distinguishable; till at last they vanished from the earth. Men may therefore now believe in Jesus, and yet not be able to *take up serpents*, or *drink deadly* poison without danger: you may meet with pious persons, but none whose touch will heal the sick; with many whose faith, we trust, is not only *as a grain of mustard seed*, but strong and active, and yet if they *say to this mountain be thou removed and cast into the sea, it shall not obey them.*

Christians also may have the Spirit of Christ, without being inspired with the certain knowledge of all divine things, or with skill infallible in the interpretation of Scripture. Ignorance, doubt, and

error, may reside in the same breast with the fountain of all truth and light : because he pours not out the streams of his bounty without measure; but *divideth to*

1 Cor. xii. *every man severally as he will.*
11.

The Spirit was promised to the Apostles to *teach them all things*, and *bring to their remembrance whatsoever* the Saviour *had said unto them*. And they laboured in the service of the Gospel as they were enabled and commanded. They communicated the will of God to the world; they committed it to writing for future ages; and they sealed it with their blood.

But yet, though the substance of our duty is evident, and the heads of the divine laws written in large characters; there are still many questions, and to appearance considerable, which can receive no probable answer without the utmost use of industry, and the help of learning, and with both no certain decision.

How-

However the divine revelation might be imparted to the primitive teachers; their successors have it to learn by slow and uncertain methods. But the same Being who made the world, redeemed it: and can we wonder to find a resemblance in his operations? Our first parent never passed through the state of infancy, but came into the world a man. The lot of his posterity is different. We are weak and helpless in our beginning of life; and ascend by tedious and tottering steps to our limited degree of strength and of understanding.

The great Apostle might boast, *The Gal. i. Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man; neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; I conferred not with flesh and blood. From*

1 Tim. i. being *a blasphemer and a persecutor and*
 15. *injurious*, he became at once not a whit
 2 Cor. xi. *inferiour to the very chiefeſt Apoſtles.*
 5.

But we are not to meaſure our expectations by theſe great examples. It is enough that our Lord hath aſſuredly promiſed, *To be with us alway even unto the end of the world:* and to procure for us *another Comforter that he may abide with us for ever.*

Matth.
 xxviii. 20.
 John xiv.
 16.

On this promiſe, and this Comforter, we ſtill rely for ſuch help as is ſtill needful, though not ſuch as we might vainly wiſh: acknowledging at the ſame time that we are as ignorant as we are feeble, both beſet with danger, and encompaſſed with doubts. Whoever thinks that good Chriſtians ſhould be exempted from error, may demand alſo that they ſhould be delivered from pain; be freed from the debility of childhood, the folly of youth, the decays of age; be created compleat in every power, and ſtart up at once to the perfection of happineſs.

May

May we not add, That good men may be led by the Spirit of God, and yet they themselves not distinguish his holy influence? and be conducted safely in the way to heaven, without discerning the very hand that guides them? How is this incredible?

You believe, all of you, the Providence of God. It is a doctrine even of natural religion. Can you distinguish between the acts of God, and the course of Nature? What is it that God doth? He doth all. No doubt. He ruleth in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. But he is invisible to your eyes: nor can you certainly separate, in the transactions that lie before you, human weakness from omnipotent power; or draw the precise line in any one event, which you now see, between God and Nature.

He is ever doing good, and almost ever
in a manner that exceeds alike our deserts
and

and our understanding. His heavenly hand, like the hidden spring in a machine, works unseen, yet powerfully; is little in appearance, but in effect wonderful. He delivers from dangers we never feared, bestows a thousand benefits we knew not that we wanted. *Not a sparrow is forgotten before God: the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* In the mean time the original cause of all is undiscerned, perhaps alas! unthought of. He is *about my path, and about my bed.*—And yet, *Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.*

Psal.
cxxxix. 2.

Job xxiii.
8, 9.

Mark iv.
26, &c.

So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day; and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how: for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after

after that the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come. — The seed is the word of God; the heart of man is the ground into which it is cast: if this be good, doubt not the care of God; he will cause it to *spring and grow up, though we know not how.* Rom. viii. 16. Job xxxviii. 31. His Spirit *which helpeth our infirmities,* will shed on it the *sweet influences* of heaven, support and cherish our tender goodness, defend it from the insects of the earth, and the storms above: the fruit is a life of piety and faith, good works and charity, purity and patience: when this is brought forth, the sickle is in the hand of the Angel of death, and the harvest is immortal glory.

It is certainly both allowable and proper to consider the most speculative points, which have any relation to religion; but our attention should be much more employed on practical subjects; and most of
all

all on *practice*. If we would obey God's commandments more, we should, all of us, question his promises less; perhaps understand them better; certainly be more largely partakers of them.

There are, and will always be, innumerable things in the divine government impossible for us to comprehend. And as those which are more known to us require our thanks and praise; so the former call for other sentiments and dispositions of mind equally reasonable, admiration, submission, trust: and all conspire to demand the conformity of our lives to the will of God. In cases which we understand, we see there is great reason for this; and in those we do not, there may be greater.

When we read of the miracles done by the Apostles, and find that in ancient times the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the lepers were cleansed, the
lame

lame walked, and the very dead were raised at the speaking of a word; we are amazed at the powers bestowed on the first preachers of the Gospel, and should be willing to submit to any degrees of rigour in our lives, that ourselves also, if it were now possible, might be honoured with the same signal endowments. Though we are not so wickedly foolish as to think, that the gifts of God can be purchased with money; whatever could procure them we should be forward to offer, crying out, with that false convert, *Give me also this power.*

*He that keepeth his commandments dwell- : Johniii.
eth in him, and he in him.* Be as good^{24.}
men as the first preachers of Christianity,
keep but with equal care the command-
ments of God, and the same Spirit will
be, *is* already, in you which was also in
them. You cannot work miracles; but
you are as dear to your Heavenly Father,
as

as those whom he enabled to raise the dead.

Nay more; men may work miracles in support of God's true religion, and yet be found at last, to have been the servants of another master; and the preacher of righteousness be condemned for his sins.

Matt. vii.
23, 24. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.*

Luke x.
20. *In this rejoice not that the Spirits are subject unto; but rather rejoice that your names*
1 Sam. xv.
22, *are written in heaven. To obey is better than sacrifice: a good life is above miracles.*

There will be found among the workers of wonders, among Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, who shall be cut off, and
cast

S E R M O N IX.

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cast into outer darkness. But of those who love God, and keep his commandments, not one shall be lost. The obedient shall all be received into the state of bliss, and be made *kings and priests to God, for ever and ever.*

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S E R M O N X.

J U D E *y.* 3.

THAT YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND
FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE
DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

WHEN the Apostles, were *filled* ^{Acts ii. 4.}
with the Holy Ghost, and began to
 speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave
 them utterance; the miracle, according to
 the notion of some writers, was wrought
 upon the audience. Though they that
 spake were Galileans, and spake too, as
K these

S E R M O N X.

these persons suppose, the language only of their own country; they were *heard* by *every man in his own tongue in which he was born.*

However that may be, in whatever words the newly inspired Apostles might utter the wonderful works of God, on the day of Pentecost; the doctrine and duties of the Christian covenant, which they have left behind them in writing, are, now at least, in one language; and the whole New Testament has been thus delivered down through many ages, and dispersed into every nation of the world. And yet, alas! such is the power of education, custom, interest, and other causes, that we have deduced a great variety of very different opinions and systems of faith from one common written word. Every Church, and Sect has a sense of it's own, which it learns to affix to the language of Scripture. And though *they* *but* *speak* *to* *us* *be* *all* *Galileans,* though there

there be among them no diversity of speech or disagreement of doctrine; Prejudice, it seems, has been able to work something like that first great wonder upon us: we *hear them every man in his own tongue in which he was born.*

The opinions which we thus owe to prepossession, we support and patronise with a temper as different from that earnestness enjoined by the Apostle, as are the tenets, possibly, for which we contend, from *the faith which was once delivered to the Saints.*

This Spirit steals upon us sometimes almost insensibly, and we are in the midst, or at the head of a faction, before we ourselves are aware of it. We know not on either side, what we are doing, but we perceive the distance widens, and charity and union are become impracticable. We cast the blame always on our adversaries; and impute to them the di-

K 2

vision

S E R M O N X.

vision that is so detrimental to us both. We observe not the motion of our own vessel; but the shore flies from us.

Sometimes we enter into these factious contests out of a regard, as we fancy, to Religion and Truth. The cloak of zeal is thrown over; and it covers even from our own eyes, often indeed from them only, avarice, ambition, vanity, or resentment.

When we are moved therefore to take upon us the execution of these orders of the Apostle St. Jude, and are going out in our armour in this cause of Faith; there are a few cautions we may do well to take along with us.

The first is this, That we be sure it is indeed the very *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*; no innovation introduced in later days by the authority or artifice of men. That we erect not on the

the basis of caprice or interest, a towering system of opinions; and call this, *The temple of the Lord; The pillar and ground of the Truth.* Jer.vii.4.
1 Tim.iii.
15.

In the next place, it would be advisable that our zeal should abate, as the articles of our belief are multiplied. Deductions in Divinity are dangerous. We shall do well to keep the *Form of sound words*; but may be more moderate in our concern for very ingenious explications of them. *Be rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught: but beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world.* Colos. ii.
7, 8.

But must not follies be checked as they rise? can new errors be opposed without new terms? Suppose a person assents to the *words* of the Gospel, but contradicts the whole meaning of it: he allows, for instance, the Resurrection; but explains

2 Tim. ii. 18. it into allegory, or teaches that it is *past*
 Tit. iii. 19. *already*. — I grant it: He *overthrows the*
faith — *A man that is an heretic after the*
first and second admonition, reject. Yet,
 remember, that Reserve is the companion
 of Wisdom, and the Guardian of Autho-
 rity.

1 Cor. xi. 16. *If any man seem to be contentious; we have*
no such custom, neither the churches of God.
 Let us refute the erroneous, and repress
 the arrogant, by the clear testimony of
 Scripture, and by the practice of the first
 churches: not enlarging our christian
 creed into an universal body of all philo-
 sophy, not deciding in it all things that
 ever have been disputed, not corrupting
 it with great swelling words of vanity,
 nor framing continually our Faith anew
 in conformity to those systems of *Science,*
falsly so called, which spring up and decay
 in every age; and are succeeded by others,
 as highly celebrated, and as soon for-
 gotten.

Our

Our shallow short-lived sophistry is but ill suited to that *word of God which liveth* ^{1 Pet. i.} *and abideth for ever.* Being in their na- ^{25.} ture repugnant, they cannot be thoroughly united. Like the iron and the clay in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, they are materials that will not incorporate. Preserve the sacred truths of religion, and deliver them down to the latest ages, unviolated. They need no ornaments of our's, they will receive none. They are defiled by decorations. *Thou* ^{Deut. xxvii. 6.} *shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of* ^{Exod. xx.} *whole stones; thou shalt not build it of hewn* ^{25.} *stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.*

Nor is every thing which is contained in the Scripture itself, for this reason essential to religion. In this great storehouse of divine truths *there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and stone; some to honour, and some, I do not say, to dishonour, but of a rank less distinguish-*
K 4
ed.

ed. It may be truth, and a Scripture truth, for which we contend; and yet our zeal may be not well placed. The possession must be very valuable which is not dearly purchased at the expense of peace. *Truth* is indeed of an awful presence, and must never be affronted with the rudeness of direct opposition; yet will she consent for a moment to pass unregarded, while your respects are offered to her Sister *Charity*.

If it be the obscure, the minute, the ceremonial part of religion for which we are contending; though the triumph be empty, the dispute is dangerous. Like the men of Ai, we pursue perhaps some little party that flies before us, and are eager that not a straggler may escape; but when we look behind, our city is in flames.

On the other hand, but for the same reasons, as we should not be forward,
and

and urgent in imposing the profession of such articles, or the use of such ceremonies, as are not, or are not plainly essential to religion; so if unreasonable men will lay them upon us, we will do all we can to content them. We will refuse no burden for the sake of peace. We will prefer the prosperity of the church of Christ before the satisfaction of our desires, or the honour of victory. Or rather, we will esteem it yet a greater pleasure and triumph, to bend to the infirmities of the weak, and yield up our own inclination and judgment, to the prejudices, or the passions, or even the perverseness of our fellow Christians.

It is a poor argument that is so often brought by the disturbers of order; That we are obliged to bear our *testimony*, as their phrase is, against encroachments. We do it best, by differing as far as possible from the spirit of those who make them; by not following their bad
exam-

example; nor accepting their challenge to quarrel about little matters; by shewing that we value peace more than they do.

An honest man, much more a Christian, may not indeed profess any thing contrary to his belief, or practice any thing against his conscience; but he may join in communion with such as do; and the pretence or the hope of better edification, will not always counterbalance the apparent mischiefs of separation and schism.

Zeal not only for faith and opinion, but even for *holiness*, if it break out beyond the restraints of Prudence and Charity, changes it's name and nature, and becomes as much more dangerous, and culpable than indifference, as the best things when corrupted are worse than others. At least, if it be still a zeal for God, yet not being *according to knowledge*,
as

as the Scripture speaks, being mistaken in it's measures, without discretion itself, and unwilling to submit to the guidance of any other; the effect and consequence may be as bad, as if the cause were more criminal: and after some interval of time, and the regular progress from Enthusiasm to Hypocrisy; the end and issue alas! may be no other than the propagation of that very unbelief and wickedness which at first we intended to root up.

God indeed is not tied to the rules of human prudence; but is able to bring light out of darkness, and make his own strength most conspicuous in the weakness of his instruments. But, setting aside his miraculous interposition, which is not hastily to be relied on, or to be alleged in our days surely without strange presumption, as the learned only can be supposed to instruct, so none but the magistrate must be allowed to govern. And this regular subordination must take place in
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the Christian, as well as every other community, if we are truly desirous of it's prosperity and continuance.

Severe he might be, and rigorous, but he was a wise commander, and a true lover of his country, who put his own son to death, for fighting in opposition to his orders; though he brought back with him in his hand the head of an enemy.

But beside the danger and mischief; these loose disorderly efforts of self-willed and separate adventurers, however more violent and observable, yet in effect and force are not to be compared to the impressions of a compact, well governed, and obedient body; like the Grecian phalanx, as it is described by the Poet †, still and steady; silent, but yet resolute; ardent

† — σιγῇ μένεν πεινότες Ἀχαιοί,
 Ἐν θυμῷ μέγα ὄντες ἀλέξεμεν ἀλλήλοισιν.

ardent without clamour; and active without confusion.

A good man chooses indeed to err rather on the side of charity; or else, we are too favourable in our concessions, when we allow that those persons who thus break loose from the reins and order of government, are actuated always by pious views, and a well meaning enthusiasm. We know, at least, the time has been, when under a conduct not unlike to theirs, and the same professions, have been concealed the most malignant and dangerous designs. The demure hypocrite, with all his cant, has been at last detected: notwithstanding his furious preaching of a sublimer piety, and a yet more thorough reformation, his venom has been discovered; and the Sectary, touched with Ithuriel's spear, starts up into a Jesuit.

That church, whose earnestness indeed
in

in this contention can never be denied, has yet, we think, in other respects been highly culpable; and may serve, in conclusion, for an example of the violation of all the rules and cautions now expressed or insinuated. A system of faith too large and voluminous, in some parts injurious to religion and virtue, in many not true, in others not certain, or not important, they yet maintain, impose, and propagate, with a violence and tyranny which no faith or truths whatever are sufficient to justify, and by arts which are condemned by all the principles of morality.

There is one way, however, by which we are always at liberty, both Laity and Clergy, to plead for our own principles, and recommend that system of faith, and form of worship which we embrace, whatever it be, to the acceptance of mankind: a way which is likely to be the most effectual of any, and is liable
to

to none of those objections which are with so much reason alleged against many other methods of making profelytes. It is such a method of converting others, as will be sure at least to have a good effect upon ourselves; and will neither expose us to the censure of obstinacy and schism on the one hand, nor of injustice and persecution on the other. In short it is the practice of virtue; the conscientious discharge of those duties, and the cultivation of those graces, which are enjoined by the universal and acknowledged principles of morality, and recommended by every profession of religion. Reverence, resignation, gratitude to the Supreme Being; respect and tenderness as well as justice and fidelity to mankind; moderation, self-government, sobriety; these things will probably recommend our belief to men, ourselves most certainly through the mediation of Christ, to the mercy of our maker. 'Tis thus we may best *adorn the doctrine of God our*
Sa-

Tit.ii.10. *Saviour*, widen the pales of his church, and strengthen his dominion. In this way we may all be preachers of righteousness, a nation of priests.

There is no danger, in our days, in the profession of religion; and the dishonour is yet perhaps on the side of infidelity. So much the more let us bend our endeavours to practice; the only point that has in it any difficulty, or much distinction. Let us preserve the profession of a pure faith, in charity; have zeal without fierceness; and meekness without fear; *speaking the truth in love*, and adding
 Ephes. iv. *to our faith virtue*, be not *unfruitful in the*
 15.
 2 Pet. i. 5, *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and for ever.

S E R M O N X I.

LUKE v. 20.

MAN, THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN THEE.

WHO can forgive sins but God alone? Luke v.
said the Jews in wonder to each^{21.}
other, when they saw the Saviour of the
world, who had so often cured their bodily
diseases, undertaking to remove the fe-
verer maladies of the mind, and *to heal the* Luke iv.
broken hearted. 18.

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It

It is true, God is both Lawgiver, and
 Rom. xiv. Judge: *who art thou that judgest another*
 4. *man's servant? to his own master he standeth*
or falleth. The Conscience of every man,
 accusing or acquitting him as he behaves,
 is God's voice within. It delivers the
 dictates of that Reason which he hath
 imparted, the suggestions of those prin-
 ciples he hath implanted; in his name,
 and with his authority. When we act
 contrary to it's directions, we know that
 we do wrong, that we violate the law of
 him who made us, and deserve a punish-
 ment which no power on earth can remit.
 Kings and Magistrates, who dispense
 justice or mercy to all others, according
 to their own pleasure, are yet themselves
 subject to the control of this inward
 monitor; and while the Prisoner reasons
 Actsxxiv. *of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to*
come, the guilty Judge trembles.

Whatever be the nature of our crimes,
 whether they be violations of temperance,
 justice,

justice, or humanity; they are all offences against God. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.* It was murder this penitent sinner had committed; yet he cries, *against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* Psal. li.

Yet was our Lord guilty of no blasphemy, when either to the poor paralytick, ^{Luke xxv. & alib.} who was let down into his presence through the roof, or to that contrite woman, who washed his feet with her ^{Luke vii. 48.} tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, he vouchsafed to pronounce those comfortable words, *Thy sins are forgiven.* ^{Luke v. 24.} *The Son of Man had power upon earth to forgive sins.* He was invested with his Father's authority, was himself God, as well as Man; the Maker and Governor of the world. *All things were* ^{John i. 3.} *made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made.* When he came into the world, he came unto his ^{John i. 11.} own, though his own received him not.

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Nay, his Apostles, authorised by his commission, guided by his Spirit, and girt with his power, they too, while here on earth, could *forgive sins*. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

The authority thus received they exercised, often in acts of mercy; giving health to the sick, feet to the lame, and, like their Lord, loosing from their infirmities those whom Satan had bound for many years: sometimes in acts of judgment; *How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the Ghost.*

Paul

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Paul filled with the Holy Ghost, set his ^{Acts xiii.} eyes on him and said, O full of all subtilty and^{9.} all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? the hand of the Lord is upon thee. — And there fell on him a mist and darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

That which remains of this authority in the Church, if it may be called by the same name, being stripped of it's miraculous power to discern the innocent from the guilty, to inflict judgments from heaven, or to deliver from them, must be content to exert itself within much narrower limits. It is the power which belongs to every society, and to the Christian, as well as others, of excluding the unworthy, and receiving back the penitent. And this branch of his authority the Apostle Paul himself was willing to execute in conjunction with his own disciples. *Sufficient to such a man is this pu-²ishment^{6.} Cor. ii.*

nishment which was inflicted of many. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love towards him. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also.

The ministers of Christ now can only declare to you the terms on which God will forgive sin, and these they must deliver as they find them in the Gospel.

The light of nature suggests no certain way of obtaining the forgiveness of sin. The offender may be sorry for his past misconduct, and amend his life; but this is not to be innocent, but *penitent*.

Did we not receive all our ability to do well from God's bounty? If then we had employed it in all things according to his will, where had been our merit, or his obligations? Having not exceeded the strict demands of justice, we might truly style ourselves *unprofitable servants*, who
 Luke vii. had *done that which was our duty to do*; and
 10, nothing

nothing more. We had only not offended: and therefore could assume to ourselves but this part of praise, to be free from censure; and lay claim to no greater reward, than that of escaping punishment.

But alas! we must relinquish even this pretension; and be obliged to own, that of all the gifts of God to man, there is none more suitable to a sinner than Forgiveness.

And God will forgive; he is disposed, and hath promised to do so. Some experience of his mercy we have at present. It is he who supplies our wants; and does he not also bear with our offences? How often doth he spare when we deserve punishment? how often in wrath remember mercy?

In the revelations which he hath been pleased to make to mankind, Almighty God hath published the charter of his

mercy more explicitly. Even to the Jews he proclaimed his own title, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*

But it is the Christian religion which exhibits the most ample display of the divine mercy, whether we consider the extent of it, or the manner of dispensing

Mark xvi. it. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the*
 15, 16. *gospel to every creature; he that believeth and*
 Acts xiii. *is baptized shall be saved. By him all that*
 39. *believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.*

But the method in which this great mercy is conveyed, recommends it beyond any other even of the divine benefactions; and is indeed astonishing. We thank God for our creation, preservation, and support. We do well. They are benefits we have not deserved, and can never repay. But these blessings, however

im-

important to us, are yet, if you will overlook both the freedom of the language, and the meanness of it, no *expense* to him. To make a world, to God is no more than to utter his command. *He* ^{Pf. xxxiii.} *spake, and it was done: let there be light; and* ^{Gen. i. 3.} *there was light.*

To recover men, when fallen by their own disobedience into a state of sin and misery, this appears to have been a task of a very different nature, more difficult to be accomplished, and requiring, I had almost said, all the efforts of omnipotence.

For consider in what terms it is represented to us. *So God loved the world, that* ^{John iii.} *he gave his only begotten Son. He hath made* ^{16.} *us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have* ^{Eph. i. 6.} *redemption through his blood. He spared not* ^{Rom. viii.} *his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* ^{32.}

And the Son himself was willing to be thus given for us. *I lay down my life for* ^{John x.} *the Sheep: No man taketh it from me; but I* ^{15. 18.}

lay

John xv. *lay it down of myself. Greater love hath no
 13. man than this, that a man lay down his life
 Eph.v.2. for his friends. Christ hath loved us, and
 hath given himself for us, an offering and a
 sacrifice to God.*

Some allowance we might expect, for the many infirmities of our nature, and the perpetual and imminent danger of our situation, from a God of equity and goodness, himself the author of our being, the maker and governour of the world: but to what number or degree of transgressions his mercy might extend; or what measure of woe we might be required to exhaust, before the cup of his wrath would be turned away from us, could be determined by no deductions of human reason. He offers us the forgiveness of every sin; and lays the weight of punishment upon the head of his Son.

Yet extensive as this offer is, however wonderful this love, in one respect they
 are

are limited. There are yet conditions to be performed on our part, to make us proper objects of this abundant grace: and after all the overflowings of the divine goodness, without *faith* and *repentance*, we cannot be partakers of it. It is true, *So God loved the world, that he gave his only* ut supra. *begotten Son; but why? to the end that all that believe in him should not perish.* Our Lord did say, *Greater love hath no man than* ut supra. *this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but how? ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* What was the Gospel that St. Paul Acts xx. 20, 21. preached? *I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Receive therefore the tender of mercy with humble gratitude: be sensible that you want it, and thankfully comply with
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the conditions God hath been pleased to annex to it. Neither doubt his goodness, nor dispute his authority. Believe what he teaches, obey what he commands. If he has provided an atonement for you, it is because you wanted it, and you may
 Pf. ii. 12. be sure he is ready to accept it. *Kiss the son lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way, if his wrath be kindled yea but a little.*

You will not, even under the gospel, perform an unfinning obedience, or arrive at absolute perfection; but you will aspire after it, and draw nearer towards it, making continual advances in piety and goodness. You will suffer no sin to have dominion over you, no graces or virtues to be strangers to you.

You have not beheld the *glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, performing miracles of mercy for the salvation of mankind, and cannot therefore be guilty of ascribing those wonders

ders of divine love, of which yourselves have been witnesses, to the powers of darkness. But, to exhort you in the Apostle's words, *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, and lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. If we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation.*

Alas! the very grace of God itself, and the offer of mercy through his Son, may prove pernicious to us; and turn, if we will have it so, to our greater condemnation. Forgiveness repulsed will return in vengeance: the blood of Christ, if it be trampled under our feet, will speak but the same things with *that of Abel*, and the voice of it cry out against us. Not only the judgments of God are to be feared; his very mercies are awful, and every
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2 Pet. ii. 21. blessing has an edge with which it can wound. *It had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. — Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

John v. 14.

S E R M O N XII.

I. COR. xv. 35.

BUT SOME MAN WILL SAY, HOW ARE
THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH
WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?

PHILOSOPHERS and the vulgar,
Pagans and Christians, have distin-
guished between the Soul and Body of
Man. By the light of nature alone, men
have been enabled to look through the
dark earthy tabernacle with which the
human

human mind is encompassed; and discern the spiritual inhabitant within. Who does not see that such life and activity, such an extent and vigour of imagination, such clearness and penetration of reason, and such earnest aspirations after virtue and immortality, can never be the genuine properties of that heavy clod which cleaves so close to the earth, and sinks into it so soon: and that these gross corporeal organs are but slaves in the service, or rather instruments in the hand of a much nobler Being?

This distinction is also clearly taught
 Matth. x. 28. in Scripture. *Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* The body of our Lord himself was not raised out of the grave till the third day; yet when one of the two malefactors who suffered with him, as he was hanging upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 42, &c. *said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou*

thou comest into thy kingdom. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Now some powers of the human mind or soul seem to be exerted with less dependence on the body than others; the intercourse between these two partners being either not uniform, or not always alike observable. The strength of the understanding is by no means proportioned to that of the limbs. A person of very weak intellects may be happy in a robust and vigorous habit of body; and on the other hand, the highest mental endowments, the brightest wit, the richest fancy, the soundest judgment, now and then make what amends they can for an infirm and sickly constitution.

Considerable members of the body may be taken away, the greatest part of it by gradual decay be lost, or even the whole by degrees changed, without any

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S E R M O N XII.

apparent alteration in the power of the mind. Men have shewn as much clearness of apprehension, and sensibility of heart, in their last moments, as in any part of their lives. And tracing the soul in it's passage to the very confines of the other world, sometimes we can discern no diminution in it's capacity or feeling: but it seems to go into the unknown state with it's passions in their full strength, and every faculty in perfection.

Yet at other times, and in many instances, on the contrary, the Mind appears to exert herself with less freedom; and gives signs of a closer connexion with her earthly companion. She seems to sympathize with the body in every the least disorder and infirmity; tasting no pleasure by reason of the other's complaints, and drooping under weaknesses not her own. The very use of her reason is interrupted and lost; she becomes melancholy or distracted by the least vio-

violence done to the minute parts of the corporeal system; by the vapour of a plant; by the touch of an insect; by the discomposure, it may be, of some portion of our frame even too small for human discernment.

So wonderful is the union between the soul and body of man; so important, and yet incomprehensible: in it's hidden nature utterly beyond all our reach; and even in the external appearances, various, irregular, and contradictory.

Even *sleep* itself, however the matter of continually repeated and universal experience, is found to be a subject that baffles all our philosophy. Infomuch that some speculative men have not been able to satisfy themselves on this head, without recourse to what is little less than miraculous; ascribing the perceptions in our repose, to the nocturnal visits, and illusive operations of spiritual Beings unseen and innumerable.

S E R M O N XII.

Blessed Lord! How little do we know of thy works! Of those parts of them with which we are most conversant! How blindly do we conjecture; how vainly err! Well may we be ignorant of thy infinite Essence; since our own frame escapes our knowledge, and we are strangers even to ourselves. Overspread with such darkness, we look to the revelation of thy word, and rejoice in that heavenly light; resigning ourselves entirely to thee; our head and heart; our conduct to thy command, our understanding to thy illumination. We are wholly thine, both body and soul; in the hands of thy mercy, Father, in every stage of our existence: while we dwell first in this house of clay; next when we shall enter, as we shall quickly, unclothed into the world of spirits; and lastly when the two parts of us, after a long, perhaps, and unknown state of separation, shall be finally reunited, never to be divided more.

Still,

Still, Curiosity will be prying into mysteries: *Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool: fool; not for wanting ability to answer these questions, but for being weak enough to propose them. That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* Grain thrown into the ground cannot spring up again without losing it's present form and contexture. By dissolution only must it be quickened into a new and more abundant life, yielding *some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.*

With what body do they come? It is in his power who made all things, to assign to each what body he will: yet, you see, *he gives to every seed it's own.* A grain of wheat doth not spring up into barley? *If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* Trust him; at least, where you can do nothing for yourselves; or if you could,

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would

would do harm. You, it is likely, would be for preserving *the life which you now live in the flesh*, and keeping the bodies of which you are already in possession. Death, whenever it comes, is generally an unwelcome guest; admitted, because he will not be put back. And yet this death, or a change equivalent to it, is the only means, now at least, since the fall, by which our dying bodies can be advanced to their due perfection, and be made partakers, with the soul, of immortal life.

We find all kinds of animals fitted for the station they are placed in, and the duration intended for them. Fish, fowl, beasts, insects, have all bodies with organs accommodated to their several degrees of perception and action. The case is the same, we see, with man, in the present world: and if it is revealed that we shall have bodies also in the world to come; we may be sure, it is because we shall want them;
and

and that they will be such as we shall want. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* Is it a wonder that this feeble, perishable frame, should be found unfit for an incorruptible and eternal state? an earthly fabrick for the heavenly city?

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial. Some animals on earth, not to say all, at a certain period pass forward into a state extremely different from that which was first assigned them. But the frame of their body is altered to suit with the intended removal; and it now as much requires the *air*, suppose, or the *water*, as before it was averse from it. They cannot subsist at all but in the very *element*, which, a very short time before, would have destroyed them in a moment. The human frame itself, among the rest, undergoes one such change even here: How is it incredible then, that when man shall be removed into yet another world, he

shall want, and shall be supplied with a celestial body, as different from the earthly, as the place of it's residence, or the nature of it's occupations?

Luke xx.
37, 38.

Our Saviour indeed speaks of the resurrection, as a person might be expected to do concerning a future state in general. His Apostle Paul does the same, in some parts even of this very Chapter where he takes so much pains to establish the doctrine of the resurrection, and to silence objections against it. The great point, no doubt, in which we are concerned, is, whether death will be the end of us; or whether we shall live after it: and if we shall, whether our future condition may be affected by any thing which it is now in our power to do. If it be sufficiently made known that we shall thus live after death; *whether in the body, or out of the body*, it might suffice that *God knoweth*. However he hath been pleased to reveal to us, in some degree, even this point

point also. Not only our natural hopes of a future life are confirmed; we are also taught that we shall be again clothed with bodies, suitable to that heavenly state; and that we shall die no more.

Happy for us, if any principle or doctrine, of natural or revealed religion, any expectation, or any reason whatever, have influence enough to induce us to live well, the little time we do live here on earth: if regard to our present or future welfare, if the fear or the love of God, if reverence to our souls, created after his image, and by their birth immortal, or respect to our very bodies, which shall be made so, or any other argument, prevail with us to do that which is right, well pleasing to our maker, and approved by our own conscience, and to *escape the corruption that 2 Pet. i. 4. is in the world.*

God made us; both soul and body;
Therefore glorify him both in your body, and ^{1 Cor. vi. 20.}
in

in your spirit, which are God's. But he not only made, he preserves us also; *he holdeth our soul in life*; he sustains our corporeal frame; he feeds, and clothes, and protects us. All our care can add nothing to our stature, and little to the length of our days: but *he will be our guide both unto death, and beyond it*; and suffer no part of us to perish. Our souls are in his hand; *the hairs of our head are numbered by him.* The life which he has given, or rather one infinitely more glorious both in soul and body, if we will accept of it, he promises to restore, and to continue for ever.

Pf. viii. 4. *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou thus visitest him?* What thanks, what service shall we pay thee for thy unbounded goodness? This poor perishable life, if we give it wholly to thee, is a small return for thy mercies, and is already thine. In that future state, which thou art pleased to

to promise, let us continue to be employed in the performance of thy commands. All thy blessings, even *the light of thy countenance* in heaven itself, will leave our happiness imperfect, if we are not permitted to tender to thee some tribute of our thankful hearts, and gratify the ardour of our affection.

Thy mercies are innumerable and infinite, and our obedience and praises, though they add nothing to thine honour, will yet, we trust, for our sake, be suffered to approach thee to all eternity. Compleat all thy kindness in admitting our little service; and fill up the whole measure of our bliss, by receiving from us a drop into the ocean of thy Felicity and Glory.

7

S E R M O N XIII.

M A T T H. xxv. 46.

AND THESE SHALL GO AWAY INTO
EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT, BUT THE
RIGHTEOUS INTO LIFE ETERNAL.

WHEN the Lord formed man
upon the earth, and *breathed into*
his nostrils the breath of life, he created
him, *to be immortal, and made him to be an* Wisd. ii.
23.
image of his own eternity.

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S E R M O N XIII.

From this happy immortality, Man, by his transgression, fell into a state of misery, and death. *For God made not death; but ungodly men by their works, and words, called it to them.* Or rather, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men: and reigned even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*

Wisd. i. 13. 16.
Rom. v. 12.
ver. 14.

If our first parents, upon their disobedience, had been punished with immediate death, they had suffered only what they too justly deserved: and their posterity had, in that case, been nothing; no matter of dispute, no objects of injustice or of favour; but classed among the innumerable tribe of possibilities, without Being.

However, Almighty God was pleased, in the overflowings of his goodness, to suspend that sentence of death which he had pronounced, till a race of men were
born

born into the world, such as could proceed from such parents, fallen from their uprightness, and driven out from the happiness of Paradise and from the tree of Life, into a state full of trouble and temptation, of diseases, and death.

Can we help reflecting here, as we pass along, on the destructive nature of sin, how ruinous in it's effects both to ourselves and all around us: how bitter even when tempered with mercy; and dreadful, though disarmed of half it's terrors.

Still further; it pleased the Supreme Father, in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom and love, to provide for us a deliverer from the power of this death which *passeth upon all men*; and by the death and resurrection of his dear Son, to open once again to us the gates of life, and restore us to that immortality both in body and soul, for which he had created us. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, in-* Matth.
herit ^{xxv. 3, 4.}

herit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. As in Adam all
1 Cor. xv. 22. *die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*
ver. 52. *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be*
Luke xx. 36. *raised incorruptible. Neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

Good men, under every dispensation of religion, considering how full of trouble the world is, and to how great a degree the comforts and blessings of it are dispersed promiscuously, have encouraged themselves with the hopes of a future
Hebr. xi. 16. recompense, and the prospect of a *better country, that is an heavenly.* The Christian religion, you see, both confirms these expectations, and enlarges them; assuring us that all good persons shall be made glorious and happy, both in body and soul, with God to all eternity.

This article of our faith, in the first place,

place, is to be received with the most profound thankfulness to the great Author of our Being, who created us at first for happiness, and perseveres through a course of such astonishing measures to bring us at last to the possession of it. Who being exalted in his own nature to the height of bliss and glory, could have no views towards himself in any thing he has done for us; and yet has created the earth for our accommodation, given his dearly beloved Son for our redemption, and prepared his own heaven for our happy habitation for ever. *Lord, what is man* ^{Pf. viii. 4.} *that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of* ^{Hebr. ii. 6, 7.} *man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him lower than the Angels, to crown him with glory and worship.*

Secondly, This doctrine of life everlasting is the greatest spur to obedience, and the practice of virtue, not only out of love and thankfulness to our divine benefactor, but out of regard to our own

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interest. The richer the reward, the more it deserves our assiduous and earnest endeavours. Shall we not *press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, when we reflect that in value it exceeds all that *eye hath seen, or ear heard, or that hath entered into the heart of man*, and hath besides this transcendent excellence, that, like the giver's mercy, it *endureth for ever*? The possessions or distinctions of this vain world in their nature can never satisfy, and drop from us as fast as we obtain them, at the latest with this short life, and many of them much sooner: but the heavenly bliss continues unfading to eternity; and after the revolution of endless, endless ages, is but still beginning. How should we despise the empty pomp, the idle bustle, the little greatness of this poor transient state; were the eyes of our understanding, by God's grace, *enlightened, to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance*. The wise merchant,

having

having found this *one pearl of great price*, Matth. xiii. 46. sells all that he hath, and buys it; gladly Matth. xiii. 44. sacrificing ease, pleasure, profit, whatever is most dear and valuable, and life itself, and esteeming all as nothing, when compared with an Eternity of Happiness: a recompense infinitely too great for any services of our's, were they ever so perfect; but not too great for God's bounty, and the merit of his dear Son. *The gift of Rom. vi. God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our* ^{23.} *Lord.*

But while with so much delight and triumph we have *respect unto the recompense* Hebr. xi. *of the reward*; we must suffer ourselves also ^{26.} to be reminded of *the day of wrath, and* Rom. ii. 2. *revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Were religion made up of promises only, it would meet with a readier acceptance; but in reality would be much less agreeable to the dictates of unprejudiced reason, and the suggestions of human experience.

Guilt deserves punishment. This we know, every one of us; and are certain of it, by our own conscioufness. Difficulties indeed may be raised concerning the degree of punishment, the province of mercy, the efficacy of repentance; but the thing itself is unquestionable; and though we should deny, we cannot doubt it.

If then the Justice of God will not permit him to let incorrigible wickedness pass finally without punishment; what period may be put to it by this, or any other Attribute of his nature, by his universal Rectitude, his infinite Wisdom, his boundless Goodness; must be far beyond the reach of our abilities to determine; or whether those who have obstinately refused all the offers of the divine mercy on earth, may not continue to be wicked, and to be miserable for ever.

Our own experience, in this life, how
vastly,

vastly, beyond all proportion, the natural punishment of crimes can sometimes exceed all the profit or pleasure that was obtained by them, may give us the most awakening intimations of what is possible: and the declarations of Scripture have raised these apprehensions into certainty, in a manner, I fear, equally decisive and awful.

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

Mark ix,
43, 44.

Lev. xiv.
10, 11.

I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels.

Matth.
xxv. 41,
42. 46.

We would gladly make a distinction between the eternity allotted to the happy, and that to which the wicked shall be condemned : but there appears no ground for it in holy Scripture. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal. Eternal and everlasting are but two different translations of one and the same word in the original.*

See, therefore, to apply the exhortation of Moses in the amplest extent, in
 Deu. xxx. 15, &c. *that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes and his judgments ; I have set before thee life and good, and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to record against you, that I have set be-*
 Ps. xc. 10. *fore you life and death ;* life ; not that poor perishing thing, here on earth called life, of
 ver. 9. *threescore years and ten, which at best is full of trouble, and is brought to an end, as it were a tale that is told : but a life of immor-*
 tality

talities and happiness; a life not terminated by death, nor invaded by debility and age; and a happiness, unallayed by pain or sorrow, and enduring for ever and ever: and *death*; not like that here below, which puts an end to all the sufferings of this mortal state, but rather a life of everlasting misery; not the extinction of a wicked and wretched existence, but a birth into a new Being of complete and never ending woe; of guilt imbittered by remorse without repentance; of envy at the sight of that celestial bliss possessed by the once unpitied poor, now separated from us by a gulf unpassable; of malice against the gracious Being, whose mercy waited for Luke xix. us so long, but is *now hid* for ever from ^{42.} *our eyes*; and of mad rage, the only passion to be gratified in hell, against the tempter and accomplices of our crimes, the companions now and partakers of our punishment, permitted by God's justice to satisfy their mutual resentment, and execute his just judgments on each other.

Jude vi.

The Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. They fell once, and fell for ever. To poor fallen man there is mercy offered, would he but accept it, unless Christ hath died in vain.

Hebr. ii.
16.

*For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. The greater the mercy, the more terrible will be the vengeance. Let it not be in vain, that God waits yet with patience for your repentance, and offers you the atonement of his dear Son. Think not that he lies in wait to catch at your transgressions, and seize upon the first little slip you make, in the midst of innumerable snares, to deliver you up to this eternal torment. Did he desire your perdition, could he not destroy you in a moment? It is because he wishes most truly for your happiness, that he hath given his only Beloved, to become a man as you are, to prevail with you to amend
your*

your life; and to bear the punishment for you of all that you have hitherto done amiss.

Let this suffice. Embrace the offer of life; fly from the wrath to come. You know not the plan of infinite government, what the order of God's Universe admits, what eternal wisdom counsels, or supreme rectitude requires. Say not within yourselves, *If he desires that I should be happy he can make me so.* He can do every thing that is right and fit to be done; and nothing more. He desires you to be happy, and 'tis therefore he does so much, and, for any thing you know, all he can do, to effect it. He is your Friend and your Father: but, in this respect like your parents upon earth, he can only lament over your calamities, if you resist his goodness, and are resolved to perish in spite of all the efforts of omnipotence.

For your own sake, and for the sake of
those

those who love you, not only on earth, but above, the blessed angels, the Holy Trinity, return to yourself, to a sound mind, to the exercise of piety, and the practice of all virtue: *there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.*

Luke xv.
7.

S E R M O N XIV.

II. TIM. ii. 19.

LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE
NAME OF CHRIST, DEPART FROM INI-
QUITY.

THERE is no person, of what
persuasion soever in religion, but
has cogent reasons to dissuade him from
a vitious course of life, and engage him
in the practice of virtue. Even *the fool*, Pf. xiv. 1.
that

that hath said in his heart, or with his lips, there is no God, yet must own that there are at least Rulers upon earth, who are
 Rom. xiii. *not a terror to good works but to the evil, and*
 3. 4. *who bear not always the sword in vain; that health attends on temperance, security on justice, honour on generosity; and that great degrees of the opposite vices, as they are universally either contemptible or odious, so they are commonly full as detrimental to the guilty person, as to any of those who are aggrieved by him.*

To all these considerations, he who styles himself a professor of the religion of nature, will add further, that he hath a God to serve, and a soul, perhaps, to save.

The followers of the great Impostor in the East are tied down to rules of devotion, sobriety, and abstinence, in some respects very rigorous; with an assurance of ample amends hereafter in the enjoyment

ment of all corporeal pleasures in a terrestrial paradise.

The exprefs promise of plenty, health, long life, and honour, with some obscure intimations of better things to come, were the motives which it pleased the Divine Wisdom to make use of in order to engage the obedience of the Jewish people: disgrace and poverty, pestilence, and death were threatened to deter them from Idolatry.

Now most of these arguments have, or had at the time when they were proposed, their degree of efficacy; and many of them are universal, alike solid and satisfactory in all ages.

But yet, as the piety and charity required by the Christian revelation are the most sublime; so the arguments urged to enforce them are the most considerable, not a few peculiar to Christianity,

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nity, and some the most weighty that can possibly be addressed to the mind of man.

In the first place, every Christian is bound to the practice of every thing good and holy by his own promise and vow. The religion of Christ is so utterly incompatible with all kinds of vice, that no person can be admitted into it by baptism, without giving the most solemn assurances, before God and the Church, that he will renounce them all. This engagement, which was first made for us before we were sensible of it's importance, we have since, it must be supposed, such of us as are arrived at the age of manhood, made our own: by a particular and formal act taking the baptismal vow upon our own souls, and binding our conscience by the *form of sound words* pronounced over us at the *laver of regeneration*. At the Lord's table also, we present unto God *ourselves, our souls and bodies,*

bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice. Nay, by barely joining with the congregation in the common Christian worship, we shew to what religion we belong, and tacitly, or rather with our own lips we openly lay claim to the blessings, and acknowledge the obligations of Christianity. Thus are the vows of God upon us all. No crime committed by a Christian is *single*. After such solemn and repeated engagements to lead a holy life, he who still commits sin, multiplies the transgression, and inflames every offence by the addition of unfaithfulness and perjury.

To these he adds also the vice of *impious ingratitude*; not only, as every other wicked person in the world doth, against Almighty God our heavenly Father, but also against his only begotten Son our Lord. Nor is there a duty in the whole catalogue of virtues, which, besides it's own intrinsic excellence, and the authority

rity of God stamped upon it, is not further and forcibly recommended to us, by the earnest intreaty of our Divine Redeemer. He, whose benefits, and whose love to us are beyond all example, and conception, requests this one thing of us, in return for all his goodness, that we do good; that we serve God; that we love one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.* If we have gratitude, let us shew it by our works, as well as words; in our lives as well as prayers; lest we incur that just reproof *why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

John xiii.
35.

Matt. xii.
48. 50.

Luke vi.
48.

But for our encouragement and direction in the exercise of all virtues, this Divine Person has been pleased also to set them before us both in his doctrine and
in

in his own life. He went about teaching truth, and doing good; but *he did no sin*, ^{1 Pet. ii.} *neither was guile found in his mouth.* ^{22.}

Whatever instances of piety, charity, humility, or self-denial he calls us to, he exhibits them in his own person. He requires no duties which he did not discharge, forbids no pleasures which he did not refuse.

The virtues suitable to the condition of men were, many of them, not naturally adapted to his state of divine greatness; and amidst the lustre of heavenly glory, his pattern, however perfect, would be invisible to an eye of flesh. But this difficulty he removes: he divests himself of this celestial glory; comes down into our world, assumes the human nature, not in appearance only, but in reality and truth, with all its weaknesses, wants, and passions, sin only excepted.

Among the conditions also of human
O life,

life, though none of them be free from troubles and trials, there is yet a wide difference; some being more honourable than others, and some more commodious: he chose to himself the lowest station, and the sharpest sufferings. He did not come into the world to display his dignity, and receive the homage of his creatures, or to taste the gratifications of sense: but to labour, and yet be in want; to minister to the necessities of others, without having where to lay his head; to heal the infirmities of men, and bear with their perverseness; to be reviled for his heavenly doctrine, and pursued with menaces and stones for the *many good*

John x.
32. *works which he had shewed for his Father.*

And as it pleased that Supreme Father, in the depth of his unsearchable counsels, to receive fallen man to mercy only through the blood of his own Son; he willingly undertook even this part also. He gave his body up to violence, to be
strip-

stripped, scourged, and nailed to the cross: thus becoming in his own blood a sacrifice, and atonement for others; and by his death reconciling a world of sinners to his offended Father.

And is there in all this no motive to piety and virtue? Is it nothing that we have been thus beloved, instructed, encouraged, and redeemed? Can we see no reason in all that has been done for us, to do what we can, I would have said, for him who hath done so much for us, but at least for ourselves? If gratitude and love touch us not; cannot self-interest move us? Are we willing to give up so many benefits, purchased for us so dearly, and offered so freely to our acceptance? Can we consent that Christ should thus have loved us, and lived and died for us; and all in vain? Yet in vain, we know, it must be, unless we lead a holy and virtuous life. *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness* ^{1 John iii, 7. 6. 10.}

is righteous : even as he is righteous : whosoever sinneth, habitually and willfully, hath not seen him nor known him. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God ; neither he that loveth not his brother.

When you are thus told of the mighty things that have been done for you, of the mercy of the Supreme Father, the love of his divine Son, and all the sufferings he underwent on your account ; you may perhaps reply, that you acknowledge all this to be true, and wish with all your heart that you could be duly sensible of it : you are sorry that your minds are not more deeply impressed ; and if you do not love your Creator and Redeemer as you ought, you can truly say, that you desire to do it.

But do you consider that there is a sure rule to prove the sincerity of these pretensions

tensions of your's? *Thou knowest the* Mark x.
commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do ^{19.}
not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false
witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and
mother. If you have such a sense of the
love of God in Christ Jesus as makes you
 good men, as leads you to do whatever
 he requires, and keeps you from commit-
 ting any thing that will offend him; the
 Gospel has it's proper effect upon you.
 And notwithstanding the coldness of your
 sentiments, all is still well, while you can
 allege your obedience as the proof of the
 sincerity of them.

But this obedience itself, in the present
 fallen condition of mankind, and corrupt
 state of the world, as it is perfect in no
 person, so is it difficult, at least in some
 instances, to all. Here therefore is ano-
 ther token of the tender care of our Re-
 deemer, who procures us assistance from
 heaven; and, leaving the earth himself,
 sends down to us *another Comforter, which* Job xiv.
 16. 26.
 is 16. 13.

is the Holy Ghost, to abide with us for ever,
 Rom.viii. *to guide us into all needful truth, to help our*
 26. *infirmities, and to bear witness with our spirit*
 Rom.viii. *that we are the children of God.* What a
 13. 16. fund of encouragement is this for patience
 in troubles, and perseverance in every
 virtue! You see how greatly a Christian is
 the care of heaven. The most holy
 Trinity is represented as co-operating to
 the salvation of Believers. Be afraid of
 the sin of not concurring humbly and
 earnestly with such a Helper. The Apo-
 stle's argument is not contradictory to it-
 self, but as just as it is awful: *It is God*
 Phil. ii. *which worketh in you both to will, and to do;*
 13. 12. *therefore, work out your own salvation with*
fear and trembling.

The obedience which you thus perform
 by God's help, will be rewarded by his
 bounty, as if it were all your own. It is
 a most eminent distinction of the Chri-
 2 Pet.i 4. *stian Religion that by it, are given unto us*
exceeding great and precious promises: we
 are

are assured not only of the protection of God's providence, and the assistance of his Spirit, but of the *Inheritance incorruptible*, ^{1 Pet. i. 4.} *and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* The resurrection of our Lord hath given men an ocular demonstration of a life after death: and he is gone into heaven, as he hath told us, *to prepare a place for his disciples*, ^{John xiv. 2.} *that where he is, there they may be also.* *Neither can they die any more: for they are* ^{Luke xx. 36.} *equal unto the Angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

It remains only to be added, in the last place, that as the rewards proposed in the Gospel exceed all that we can ask or think; so the punishment denounced against the impenitent is proportionably alarming. They shall be cast both *body and soul into* ^{Matth x. 28.} *hell, into outer darkness, where the worm dieth* ^{Matt viii. 12.} *not, and the fire is not quenched.* *When the* ^{Mark ix. 4.} *Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the* ^{Matth. xxv.} *holy Angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be*

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gathered all nations: and he shall separate them as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left: and these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

Lam. iii.
33.

As a wicked Christian is more inexcusable than those who sin with less knowledge of their duty, and less experience of the Divine goodness; so will his punishment be more severe. Mercy is indeed the most amiable attribute of the Almighty. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* But there is a time when mercy, even the Divine mercy, abused, is turned to vengeance.

The goodness, and love, even of God himself, become to the incorrigible and obstinate, only the foundation of fear and danger. Every blessing he hath bestowed, or offered, the regeneration of baptism, the communion of the body and blood

blood of Christ, the love of God, the gift of his dear Son, the mission of his holy Spirit, and the everlasting habitations prepared in heaven, if we refuse to hear, now when they call us to amendment, hereafter will *rise up against us, and condemn us.*

A Christian stands not on the same level with other men. As his virtues ought to be more eminent: what he does amiss, is more criminal. God hath provided for him the highest mansions in the kingdom of glory, and is desirous to place him nearest to himself in heaven; but if he resist the means of grace, and reject the offer of salvation, his punishment will be as terrible as his hopes were glorious.

Thus then the Christian's Creed is a *doctrine according to godliness*; all the capital articles of it enforcing most strongly a virtuous and godly life. We have all the great reasons to be good men, which
P are

S E R M O N XIV.

are common to others, and more, and greater, over and above. Let us not suffer them to be lost upon us. Let the piety and virtue of our lives be answerable to these accumulated obligations: and if our own solemn engagements; if the precepts, or doctrine, or love of Christ; if the example of his life, the propitiation of his death, the sanctification of his Spirit; if the offer of everlasting happiness, or the terror of eternal misery, be arguments of any weight; then, however others live, *let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity!*

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